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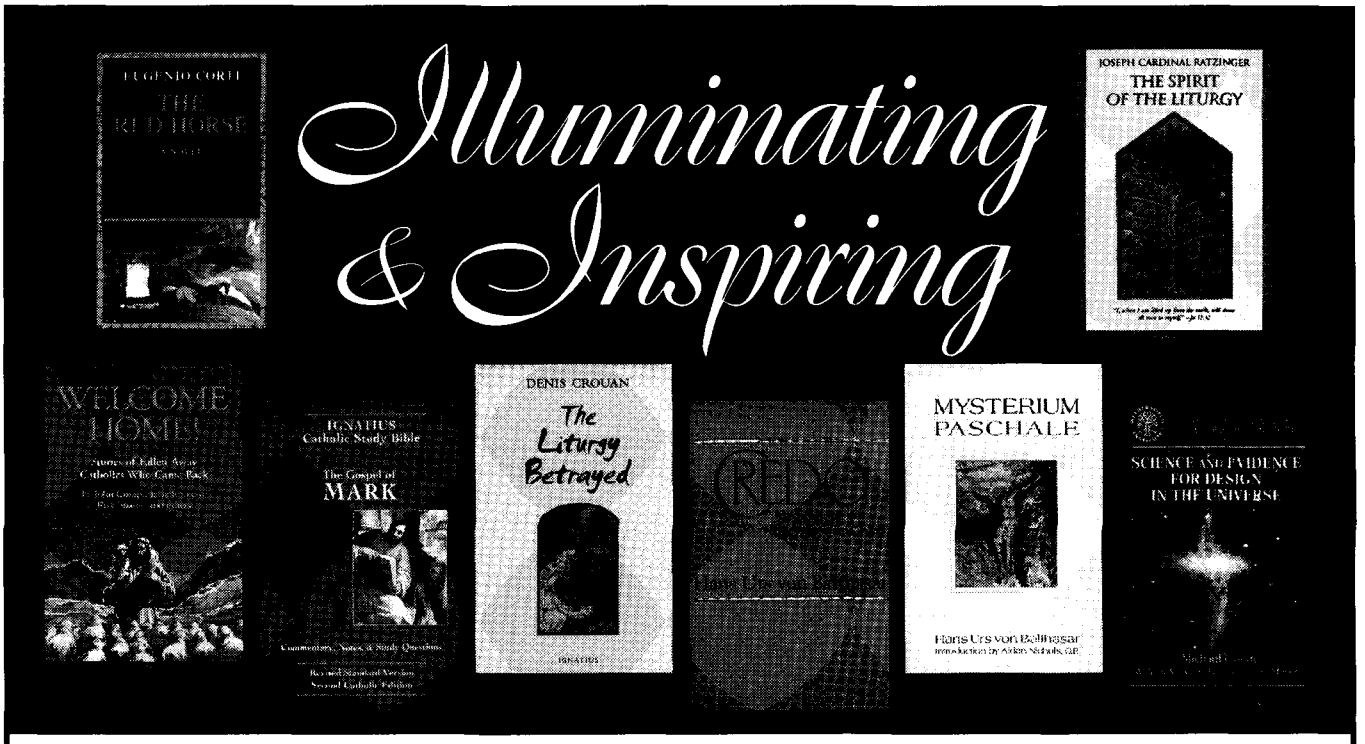

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MARCH 2001 • Number 111

CORRESPONDENCE 2 The churches of Mary and Peter; pro-life, anti-violence; the Jewish moment; social justice reconsidered; the God of the philosopher; liberal arts and Christian education; Flannery O'Connor and the bishop; Barzun's belief

THIS TIME 13 *James Nuechterlein* Ecumenical Conundrums

OPINION 15 *Raymond J. de Souza* The Politics of Incivility

18 *Dana Mack* Educating for Marriage, Sort Of

20 *Hugh Liebert* It Ain't Got That Swing

ARTICLES 23 *Wilfred M. McClay* Clio's Makeshift Laboratory

28 The Future of the Papacy: A Symposium
Russell Hittinger, Midge Decter, Avery Dulles, Robert W. Jenson, David B. Hart, Paul J. Griffiths

37 *Edward T. Oakes* Icons and Kitsch

BOOKS 45

George McKenna A New Birth of Freedom by Harry V. Jaffa
Walter Sundberg Hitler: 1936-1945: Nemesis by Ian Kershaw
Andrew J. Bacevich Present Dangers edited by Robert Kagan and William Kristol
John J. Reilly Daemonomania by John Crowley
Charlotte Allen A Bishop's Tale by Craig Harline and Eddy Put

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 65 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
Richard John Neuhaus
This Month: As the New Millennium Begins, *etc.*
Poetry by *Sally Thomas* (12)

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Peter and Mary Together

In "Evangelicals in the Church of Mary" (December 2000), Daniel P. Moloney addresses the problems involved when evangelicals actively evangelize in Roman Catholic venues. He states that a genuine commitment to Christ is more important than the location of one's ecclesiastical home. While this view may be surprising to some (both Protestants and Catholics), it is consistent with received Roman Catholic tradition.

Concerning evangelical evangelization among Roman Catholic students, Mr. Moloney says that "I could certainly foresee that some students who were baptized Catholic might decide to convert to evangelical Protestantism." Further, "I think such conversions could, in some instances, turn out to be a good thing. And I think John Paul II might agree with me." Let's turn this situation around: Would I, as an evangelical Protestant, welcome believing Catholics witnessing among nominal Protestants, even if it might lead to those Protestants becoming Roman Catholics? You bet I would. The vision of Catholics such as Peter Kreeft, Thomas Howard, and Ralph Martin witnessing for Christ among pagan Protestant university students gladdens my heart.

I am involved in an effort, *Logos Ministries*, which provides a weekly ecumenical Bible study. The classes meet in seven venues in Southern California and Arizona. *Logos Ministries* Bible classes are sponsored by over two hundred churches representing eighteen Christian denominations. The ministry was begun by Dr. Bill Creasy, a Roman Catholic, who has taught a popular course called "Through the Bible in One Year" in the English Department at UCLA. A few years ago, Dr. Creasy's priest asked him to teach a class for lay people in his church in Westwood, California, and the rest is history. Each week, over four thousand people are active in the various locations. Creasy is the main teacher and has two colleagues, one Catholic and one evangelical Protestant.

I have been personally involved in these classes for several years. I know of no "sheep-stealing" activities occurring during these classes. All theological questions are deferred to one's own denominational setting. I think Mr. Moloney would be pleased.

Ralph E. MacKenzie
Executive Director
San Diego Christian Forum
Mt. Soledad Presbyterian Church
La Jolla, California

Daniel P. Moloney takes a reflection of the Holy Father about the nature of discipleship and how grace can abound outside the Catholic Church and concludes that it's acceptable "in some instances" to leave the Church and be a good Protestant rather than remain in her bosom as a lukewarm Catholic. Mr. Moloney tries to have it both ways. He can't say it's very, very important to be in the Church of Peter, but it's acceptable if you're not as long as you're in the Church of Mary. If Protestants and Catholics shared the same gospel, they would worship in the same church. Most Protestants I know would cringe at the thought of being in Mary's Church. Why should one even accept Mr. Moloney's premise that a good Protestant is necessarily better than a bad Catholic? Both states contain serious spiritual dangers according to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

This treacle by Mr. Moloney, who apparently is an orthodox Catholic, is another piece of evidence that Catholics (and Protestants) need to reacquire a seriousness about what's at stake with respect to church mem-

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bership, namely, their souls. Mr. Moloney's insouciance about this contains, oddly, a tinge of condescension toward sincere Protestants. The Catholic Church's nuanced teaching on the condition of souls, whether Catholic or Protestant, can help people be charitable toward those with whom they may disagree, but it was never intended to be a license for religious indifferentism or gentlemanly negotiation of acceptance of some status quo, e.g., "You try to accept the Pope and we'll work on accepting Jesus into our hearts as our personal Lord and Savior." If the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of the truth, why, out of charity, would a Catholic encourage evangelicals to lead his fellow Catholics out of the Church? What type of message does this send to Protestants about the seriousness of the Church's claims? You don't have to be obsessed with sheep stealing to be concerned about this. Maybe our energies should be channeled toward bringing forth in the Catholic Church what people have found in her for centuries, viz., the total truth about Jesus Christ and the peace and joy that derives therefrom.

David Lancaster
Riverside, Connecticut

I appreciated Daniel P. Moloney's article regarding the expectations, similarities, and differences between evangelicals and Catholics.

A few thoughts come to mind, based on my own experiences in working with a wide range of Catholics and evangelicals, both because of my experience of being a student in a Catholic graduate school (Loyola University of Chicago) and working primarily with evangelical service groups (such as my current position with the Salvation Army).

In our rehabilitation ministry's experience with alcoholics, the two largest groups with whom we work are those with Catholic and Southern Baptist backgrounds. We find them to be remarkably similar in their general religious formation, which typically did not incorporate religion as an internalized factor in their daily lives and decisions.

Many evangelicals "grow up in church" in ways that are quite similar to "cradle Catholics." They learn similar doctrines and parallel, if not identical, approaches to how one can be seen as loyal to the church without committing oneself to a personal relationship with God.

One interesting example of this is a friend of mine, a psychologist, who grew up in an evangelical tradition, but has recently converted to Catholicism because he believes it "more pure and more moral" in its foundational theology. As with many conversions, his was stimulated by a personal experience in which his wife of seven years divorced him, and the evangelical church of which they were a part refused to make a stand against this. He felt that this was a travesty, and began to search for a church that would have a higher moral position concerning the sanctity of marriage and the family. His journey led him to the Roman Catholic Church, where he now feels that he has internalized his religion in a new, more personal, and more dependable fashion.

My experience is that Roman Catholics and Protestant evangelicals both share many traditions of Christian education and many subdivisions of religious experience, although they may view these through different lenses and historical perspectives. Perhaps it is time that we got more comfortable with the crossing back and forth between evangelical commitments and Catholic commitments. We might even learn a few things from each other, and find out that there are many complementary and even supportive experiences we could provide to each other.

Captain John R. Cheydleur
Territorial Social Services Secretary
The Salvation Army
West Nyack, New York

I want to thank Daniel P. Moloney for his article. As a Protestant, I find myself in the quandary of appreciating the wisdom of the Pope and the Catholic Church but being unable to agree ultimately with various Catholic doctrines. To see that the Pope can envision his role as that of a servant to all who submit to Christ, even those outside the Catholic Church, only increases my respect for him. I wish more Christians would be so willing to serve each other.

David Hafvenstein
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

Daniel P. Moloney replies:

I first want to thank all the people, both Catholics and evangelicals, who wrote to me privately to express how much they liked the article. I expected that some people would not understand or would disagree with my argument, but I did not expect the warm and genuinely excited reactions from those whose own experience has led them to see Christ on the other side of the long border between contemporary Catholic and evangelical religious experiences. It's one thing to discuss evangelical-Catholic relations on the level of theology; it's another to make it work in practice. To Ralph E. MacKenzie and others engaged in this complicated ministry (on behalf of the Church of Mary, one might say), I certainly wish the best.

"If the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of the truth," David Lancaster asks, "why, out of charity, would a Catholic encourage evangelicals to lead his fellow Catholics out of the Church?" This question misstates my position slightly—I don't "encourage evangelicals" to do anything other than minister to other evangelicals—but it does exemplify the conservative Catholic mindset that I most wanted to disturb with my article. As I said numerous times and in different ways, I believe that the Catholic Church has the fullness of truth, and that a person will be most

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deeply happy only when he is on fire for Christ within the Catholic Church. But many baptized Christians have a less perfect relationship with Christ, less perfect either in jurisdiction or in charity. The Pope, quite sensibly, thinks that perfection in charity is more important than perfection in jurisdiction, and my article was an attempt to show how this might apply to the question at hand. In doing so, I tried to make it clear that all Christians, including Protestants, need the spiritual direction, pastoral leadership, and nourishing grace that Christ commissioned Peter and his successors to provide. Rather than insouciance, I think this shows a very serious commitment to saving as many souls as possible. The Church has a lot more to offer those who submit to it completely, I agree, because submission to the Catholic Church is submission to Christ's will that his flock be fed by Peter. But surely those who love Christ passionately though imperfectly are more likely to submit to that will than those who hardly love him at all.

I very much welcome Captain John R. Cheydleur's point that "growing up in church" can lead to routinized religion and lukewarmness among evangelicals too. Communicating one's zeal to one's children is difficult in any religious tradition, and it is not unexpected that children who do not share their parents' fervor might feel the lack and seek God elsewhere. I'm a little uncomfortable with his phrase "the crossing back and forth between evangelical commitments and Catholic commitments"—to me that sounds too casual for such an important matter—but I think I get his point. Catholics are already copying Protestant techniques for generating enthusiasm in their children (there's even a growing Catholic niche within Contemporary Christian Music), and evangelicals are tinkering with the model of Catholic education in their own Christian schools. More substantively, many Catholics appreciate the straightforward earnestness of evangelical devotion, while evangelicals are beginning to appropriate the spiritual exercises and theological precision developed in the Catholic tradition. This is possible only because Catholics and evangelicals both have a rich love for Christ, and want it to get richer.

As a Protestant, David Hafvenstein likes the idea of the Pope, and the Church more broadly, as his servant, and I have to confess that as a Catholic, I do too. There aren't enough good teachers and pastors in the modern world for Protestants to ignore the Catholic Church; there aren't enough good Christians in the world for the Church not to help all those who wish to follow Christ do so as best they can.

Pro-Life, Anti-Violence

James K. Fitzpatrick's ingenuously titled "A Pro-Life Loss of Nerve?" (December 2000) utterly fails to address the central matter of the issue he raises, and substitutes instead a lame and self-contradictory thesis.

His first fourteen paragraphs make a chillingly accurate presentation of the arguments of the more articulate pro-life "shooters." I would congratulate him did I not feel that in doing this much well while doing the rest poorly he is likely to inspire more simple-minded "shooters" to follow through on the logic of the argument. I say this having read a number of the things advocates of "pro-life violence" have published over the years and having corresponded at length with Paul Hill, who is on death row in Florida for a double murder outside an abortion clinic in 1994.

To argue that the principal reason very few of us in the pro-life cause have joined those militant ranks is because we believe "the Round Table has not yet been broken" is a great error. It is an error, first, because the metaphor is imprecise. It is also an error because the logical conclusion is that once we feel the vague attributes of a "broken Round Table" have been reached, it will become acceptable Christian ethics to shoot abortionists. Finally, it is an error because the reason the Christian does not advocate or practice shooting abortionists is grounded in biblical ethics, rather than some finger-in-the-breeze sense of the political or social climate.

Briefly put (and I have put it at book length in a long work on the subject, "Shattering the Image," accessible at the website www.oakandyewpress.com), the Christian does not shoot abortionists because to do so fits all the prerequisites by which the Bible defines murder, and allows for none of the biblical exceptions regarding taking human life.

Mr. Fitzpatrick refers to the infernal conspiracy between mother and abortionist. Given the distribution of labor (an unfortunate choice of words) I see between the mother and abortionist, neither of them is in fact a lawbreaker until the moment the procedure begins. The innocent third party cannot live apart from the one coconspirator, nor can he in any way defend himself against the other, yet there is no conceivable situation in which a fourth party could actually defend him without participating in cold-blooded murder—planning, carrying a weapon for the purpose, lying in wait, and carrying out the plan. This violates God's command that it is not individual citizens, but the civil authority, that is responsible "for the punishment of evildoers" (1 Peter 2).

James H. Trott
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

James K. Fitzpatrick makes a thoughtful point about the tendency of pro-life advocates to treat those who engage in abortion as misinformed, errant neighbors rather than as murderers. There is, I think, another reason for this tendency: an unconscious recognition of the difficulty in empirically proving the claim that life begins precisely at conception. People

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may generally be unaware of the historical lack of agreement among the fathers of the Church on when the fetus possesses a soul, but they likely sense at some level of their mind that their pro-life stance is personally based more on passionate belief than on demonstrable fact. This underlying awareness possibly also contributes to their disinclination to treat those who participate in abortion as murderers.

William J. Scheick
Austin, Texas

If the various polls and surveys on the subject are even partially correct, there are millions of men and women who would unhesitatingly describe themselves as pro-life who also regularly use the contraceptive pill, which is known to act, at least some of the time, as an abortifacient. Mr. Fitzpatrick's observation that the conceptus is not "self-evidently" a human person cuts both ways. These same couples know that all contraceptives have a real, albeit small, rate of failure and that the backup to failed contraception is abortion.

The real pro-life loss of nerve lies in our failure to unconditionally accept the gifts God is trying to give us.

Gerard S. Brungardt, M.D.
Wichita, Kansas

If ever a loss of pro-life nerve existed, I detect it at the critical moment where James K. Fitzpatrick, having eloquently laid out the *status question is*, begins to justify his answer in the negative. Exactly the opposite answer is called for by his own reasoning. That requires not a resort to violence, but to nonviolent confrontation at the abortuaries. I contend that the best hope for staving off violent confrontation is nonviolent confrontation.

Mr. Fitzpatrick seems to say that the answer to today's violence in the womb is persuasion and civil discourse leading to the eventual triumph of truth and justice. Is that the best we can do for the next baby being led to slaughter in the neighborhood abortuary? We can opt for ongoing civil discourse, but notice that the abortion industry does not wait to win us over before it starts the suction machines. It does not even regard us as civil and decent persons. We are the abortionists' enemy and they proceed on that principle. Some discourse! The violence against the unborn is perpetrated by people who show up to kill and is unwittingly abetted by good people who do not show up to save—and rationalize why they need not since civil discourse will, like truth, eventually win out.

Pro-lifers: be at least as dedicated as those who kill. Show up to pray and to support the sidewalk counselors. You will get to see a mom here and there change her mind because of you. Months later when she returns with her newborn, you will get to hold the baby you helped save. There's nothing to compare with it. You'll be glad you did. And for those you don't save, you've got friends in high places.

(The Rev.) Francis G. McCloskey
Hudson, New York

I thank James K. Fitzpatrick for his argument and insights. I am a Catholic African-American and pro-life. I believe that abortion and slavery differ only in when the action takes place: abortion in the womb, slavery from the moment of birth. In either case, a fetus or a slave is legally considered a nonperson, a subhuman. I believe doctors and mothers should be imprisoned for abortion. Murder is murder, period. Human life at every stage either carries a supreme value or it does not.

I am persuaded by Mr. Fitzpatrick to accept that violence may be urgent and necessary. However, I believe it is more critical for pro-lifers not to wait until violence becomes the only remedy. Pro-lifers should take action by getting more involved in the lives of young men and women so that they can be more effective in eliminating the relational and economic factors that lead to the resort to abortion.

Armed violence is always an action of war, necessary only when all creative efforts to make peace have failed. I don't believe that is our situation . . . yet. But then every life is too valuable to wait for peaceful means to be exhausted. My ancestors knew that very well. So what do we do?

Daniel J. Johnson
Hainesville, Illinois

James K. Fitzpatrick argues that we extol as heroes those who tried to free prisoners at Auschwitz through violent means, whether or not they actually saved a life. But if I kill someone who might be trying to kill someone else, yet the third party dies anyway, is this morally equal to someone who tries to save lives through nonlethal means and succeeds? Mr. Fitzpatrick says that "we would not react patiently to a German who excused his reluctance to use force in 1942 to free concentration camp inmates if he argued that he was convinced at the time that he could do more good by working within the system to end Nazi control than by risking his own arrest and imprisonment in an armed strike to free a few dozen inmates scheduled for the gas chambers on a single morning."

This statement is immorally equivocal. Pope Pius XII did not demand that people rise up in violence to stop the Nazis, yet many regard him as a hero because he and the Church were able to save 800,000 Jews through civil disobedience and cultural resistance. Ask yourself: Do you feel greater respect for a man who tried to free some people at Dachau by launching a suicide attack against several Nazi guards and failed, or for Oskar Schindler, who worked nonviolently to rescue victims of the Nazis? And can one state that the peaceful pro-life activists who have saved hundreds of thousands of children are less effective or morally inferior to a few terrorists who cannot with any certainty say they've saved a single life at all?

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As to moral considerations, pro-lifers believe that taking a human life is wrong. In violating the rule of law by shooting a doctor who provides abortions, you are violating the moral law that you are claiming to uphold. A man is not an "abortionist," he is a man, endowed by his Creator with inalienable rights and the dignity that we all possess by the simple fact that we are people, that we are created in His image. The doctor's worth is more than one procedure he may or may not perform on any given day, and to deny him his dignity as a human being is to dehumanize him and trespass against the grace of God that we seek to live under and uphold. We do not have the right to take justice into our own hands: this is Caesar's domain, and if Caesar's law is wrong, in an open society we must oppose that law, not those who partake of its liberties.

The law is wrong, let no one be mistaken about that. But the law is wrong because abortion is wrong, and to that extent, we must be seeking to end abortion, not doctors' lives. We can do this best through cultural resistance. This means prayer, exhortation, encouraging others not to get into compromising situations, and making sure that we ourselves do not either. This means, most importantly, aiding women who find themselves in the position of contemplating abortion.

That's the front line of cultural resistance and Christian humanism: the response to the culture of death must be charity, love. I defy anyone to find an ounce of love in a bullet. And I defy anyone to explain to a doctor's family—the next time one is gunned down at an abortion clinic—that the reason their husband or their father is dead is because someone decided that the Round Table was broken.

Roger Zalneraitis, Jr.
Crownsville, Maryland

James K. Fitzpatrick replies:

James H. Trott's case hinges upon his assertion that "the Christian does not shoot abortionists because to do so fits all the prerequisites by which the Bible defines murder, and allows for none of the biblical exceptions regarding taking human life." Key to this conclusion is his observation that the abortionist is not "a lawbreaker until the moment the procedure begins." I do not agree that this qualification is crucial. This is why I used the example of anti-Nazi partisans planning an attack on a concentration camp the night before planned executions. There would be few objections from moral theologians to this use of physical force, meant to *prevent* murderers from completing their evil deed, even if the guerrillas did everything Mr. Trott objects to—"planning, carrying a weapon for the purpose, lying in wait, and carrying out the plan." It would be of little consequence that the guards in question were not going to kill anyone until a few hours later than the planned attack against them. This is why I remain convinced that my application of C. S. Lewis' "Round Table" metaphor is not "lame." Pro-lifers are not willing to shoot abortionists because they do not see them, their nurses and office staff—and their patients—as comparably villainous to concentration camp guards. They are aware of the cultural forces that have led otherwise virtuous individuals into the pro-choice mentality. This leads to the current forbearance in respect to them.

I agree with William J. Scheik's observation. It is the point I was trying to make when I wrote that "most pro-life activists would concede that the fetus, especially in the early stages of its development, is not *self-evidently* (I repeat: not *self-evidently*) a human person; that there very well may be an element of religious belief that informs their conviction that human life begins at the moment of conception." It is this understanding that is at the root of their condemnation of the application of lethal force against abortionists.

I suspect that Dr. Brunghardt is correct, though I wish he were not. In fact, I would go farther. I suspect that there may be more "pro-life" Americans than we think who would not vote in private to actually end legalized abortion—that they have grown accustomed to the reality that abortion is there "just in case" something uncomfortable occurs in their lives in regard to an unwanted pregnancy.

I have no disagreement with Father McCloskey, and his disagreement with me centers on something he infers which I did not imply. I am not opposed in any way to nonviolent protests at abortion clinics. My focus was on why lethal violence is not appropriate against abortionists and their staffs, when it would be considered heroic to use force to save, for instance, infants under attack or to free concentration camp inmates.

Daniel J. Johnson writes that he was persuaded by me "to accept that violence may be urgent and necessary" to save the lives of the unborn. That was not my intent. My objective was to demonstrate why violence is *not* the appropriate response to legal abortions, in spite of the ugly reality of what takes place in an abortion—and in spite of the fact that the Church and society as a whole would approve of necessary violence to save the lives of toddlers facing death at the hands of a murderous assailant.

This is where I take issue with Roger Zalneraitis, Jr. While I agree that violence against abortionists cannot be condoned (for the reasons stated in my article), I cannot shrug off the troublesome paradoxes implicit in that stance as easily as he does. I insist that the Church would not condemn guerrilla action taken to free concentration camp inmates facing Nazi gas chambers, or the use of force by a civilian to stop killings such as those that took place at Columbine High School, or in a situation such as my example of a man killing infants in a nursery. Saying this, of course, does not demean in any way the efforts of Oskar Schindler. But I don't think Schindler would have condemned a guerrilla

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strike against a concentration camp. Schindler's approach and a guerrilla strike would not be mutually exclusive. Why would he think it immoral to try to save dozens of innocent victims—specific individual human beings about to be killed—because he was involved in a separate effort to save thousands of other men and women who were at risk of being rounded up and placed in those concentration camps?

The Jewish Moment

Thanks for Marc Gellman's sermon, "Joe Lieberman as Rorschach Test" (December 2000). The December issue arrived the day I was scheduled to talk to a Newman Center group about "Catholic reading." Rabbi Gellman's idea of the "Judaectomy" that many Jews feel they must perform on themselves in order to participate in civic discourse rang true (mutatis mutandis) for these young Catholics, who understand that a certain unwritten code of etiquette requires them to check their faith at the door in order to be heard as intellectuals.

The aggressive, strangely obsessive secularization of civic discourse is mirrored in these young people's intellectual formation. They document the phenomenon of the "Catholectomy" when they recall how they have found themselves saying, defensively, "I'm a Catholic, but I don't think like one." And their institutions encourage them in this mental self-mutilation.

I wonder if we could do a better job in the formation of Catholic thinkers—perhaps with Youth Education classes, perhaps in the Newman Centers—in preventing the assumption that the life of faith has to be compartmentalized away from all other mental activity, where it can have no real effect. I know of one program for young Catholics, and I doubt it's unusual, where the typical activities consist of having them read bits of *The Celestine Prophecy* or watch a videotape of *The Sixth Sense*—activities that I now think amount to buying them duck decoys, in Rabbi Gellman's unforgettable conceit. I suppose we're working to increase their awareness of alternatives to a faith they've never really been encouraged to think of as intellectually challenging. The predictable result is that they conclude there's something limited and parochial about their own tradition, and never see its rich, complex internal dynamics, or its systematic perspectives on matters outside what they're accustomed to thinking of as "church." They cut off an important part of themselves, and deprive the rest of us of what might yet make our public life something more than a scramble for goodies.

Adam Brooke Davis
Department of English
Truman State University
Kirksville, Missouri

Marc Gellman replies:

Thanks to Professor Davis for his letter. When I decided to preach about Joe Lieberman during last fall's High Holidays, and at the beginning of the real campaign, I had no idea the election would come to such a judicially and socially convulsive end. Let me briefly share some of my own convulsive and random post-election reactions to Joe with post-election clarity.

I respect the cavils of those who thought I was too easy on Joe. To the group who see him as "all yarmulke, no torah" I must say that I too as a pro-life supporter grieve for the spiritual myopia of a man who obviously feels God commanding him not to drive on the Sabbath, but who cannot feel God commanding him to protect unborn life by outlawing late-term abortions that clearly violate Jewish law and values. I tried to give permission to those Jews who wanted to vote against him despite his Jewishness. I may have been too nuanced in this, and I must say that I am still unsure about the motives of those who opposed Joe. Was it truly his politics or was it a lingering anti-Jewishness seeking a more respectable cast?

My intention was not to defend Joe Lieberman's Jewish shortcomings, but to honor along with all spiritually generous people the historically monumental moment of Joe Lieberman's selection. In reflecting, I must say that I do not remember any great Catholic outburst of criticism against Jack Kennedy in 1960 because he was not a pure enough representative of Catholic teachings. So, I will not be bound by my political differences with Joe to cast off any pride or joy at his selection. I am happy and proud and it was time to say so. I just don't know whether the anti-Joe folks who have kindly written to me are as sincerely concerned as they profess about the purity of his orthodoxy or, perhaps, whether they are struggling with a darker, more ignoble, concern.

I was, of course, saddened by the way religion talk virtually disappeared from Joe's lips after the moving and heroic Nashville and Detroit speeches of the early campaign. Someone obviously muzzled his refreshing and once passionate religio-political passions. I also was dismayed at his financial courting of the very Hollywood moguls whose pornographic and violent products he had been denouncing for years. I was saddened to see him assent to the campaign to void military ballots, while demanding that every vote count. But I was reflecting on Sen. Lieberman, not St. Lieberman. Mostly, I wanted to make a passionate plea to Jews to stop fearing and bashing Christian conservatives when the first Jew on a national ticket was talking just like one of them. I wanted to produce a paean of thanks for a country that has not just let my people in, but has let my people lead.

And, a last note, to those who thought my comments on "duck decoy Jews" were degrading, insulting, and demeaning—I certainly hope so.

Is Social Justice Just?

Michael Novak ("Defining Social Justice," December 2000) would have us

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accept a definition of "social justice" that totally disregards common usage. "We must," he says, "rule out any use of 'social justice' that does not attach to the habits (that is, virtues) of individuals." The notion that government is a means by which moral individuals can act collectively to help disadvantaged people has no place in his concept of "social justice."

A definition of "social justice" taking common usage into account would include the outcome when government provides shelter for a person whose earning capacity is not sufficient to provide shelter for herself and her children. Mr. Novak can argue that it is unjust to coerce citizens to provide funds so that the mother and her children do not freeze in the street, but he is in lexicographical limbo when he tries to coopt a term that is used to describe programs in parishes and dioceses across the country that encourage governments to assist the disadvantaged.

Novak is overly clever in working his way to a questionable end result. He begins with a process of disassembly focusing on the word "social," which, if applied generally, would require elimination of many terms of art including one of his favorite bogies, "command economy." He then draws on his impressive intellect to forge an elaborate definition that suits his politics (and, in its complexity, reminds me of my days working with the Internal Revenue Code).

Exploration of divergent views of what is just and whether those views can be reconciled would have been a more worthy challenge for Mr. Novak.

John Wolf
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Common use of "social justice" may be a residue of Marxism in the same way that flabby nihilism is a residue of Nietzsche, but Catholics and Jews are not blameless in using the term over the years in North and South America in support of a vast range of ill-conceived central government policies. Mr. Novak provides a case to civilize the word and perhaps we cannot escape its use, but its history is not a happy one. Social justice was a favorite term of Latin American politicos of left, right, and center in recent generations and helped foster policies that in practice concentrated wealth, impoverished the countryside, flooded cities with rural immigrants, and retarded political and economic development.

Class war in this country is taking us in an analogous direction, and that term, social justice, is at the center. Would George W. Bush have felt compelled to call himself a compassionate conservative were not central government policies aimed at "social justice" widely perceived as genuine and compassionate? The assumption is that the loss of freedom involved in social policies is justified because such programs actually achieve their social objectives. However, we can say with some confidence that central government schemes aimed at social justice tend to undermine community, retard economic growth, and exacerbate the differences between the poor and the wealthy in this country just as they did in South America.

Social justice is socially unjust. Let's find a better term.

John H. Penfold
Jackson, Wyoming

The God of the Philosopher

It is true that, as the theologians say, all things—even Adam's and our sin—"tend" to God's glory. That said, are we really going to agree with Edward T. Oakes ("Philosophy in an Old Key," December 2000) that someone like Bryan Magee who refuses to love God with all his mind is, in the active, volitional sense of the term, giving glory to God? Does God really think that those who refuse to acknowledge His existence are giving Him glory? This sounds much more like the "vain and hollow philosophy" that decidedly does not give God glory but attempts to rob Him of it (Colossians 2:8).

At first blush, an agnostic seems to be more intellectually honest than either the atheist or the theist: the atheist claims to have such all-encompassing knowledge that he can state definitively that God does not exist. The agnostic seems more humble, acknowledging that his knowledge is not so exhaustive, and that God may in fact exist somewhere beyond the limits of his knowledge. But in fact, he is just as certain and committed as the atheist: whereas the atheist is absolutely certain that God does not exist, the agnostic is absolutely certain that God cannot be known with certainty. He has no good reason to believe this (he has to deny the activity of God in history that is recorded in Scripture, as well as the witness of creation); he simply believes it and then tries to justify it intellectually. He is using his agnostic posture to deny the knowledge of God that he in fact already possesses.

Contrary to what Magee states, he is actually very religious: he is religiously committed to God being unknown so that he can comfort himself with the "knowledge" that he might not have to answer to this God who is actually clearly revealed in the things that He has made (Romans 1:19-21).

Whereas the atheist has a firm faith commitment in the ontological/metaphysical realm, i.e., in relation to God's existence, the agnostic has just as strong a faith commitment in the epistemological one, i.e., in relation to God's knowability. Trinitarian theists need not fear either of them, and we should not be so humble before them. Instead, we should try to help them by showing them how foolish it is to use their minds to reject God rather than love Him. That would seem to me to be something that would bring glory to God.

Brian D. Nolder
Bangor, Maine

Edward T. Oakes' delightful and insightful review of Bryan Magee's *Confessions of a Philosopher* makes me wish

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that Father Oakes will someday write a similar book on his own philosophical autobiography.

Your philosophical readers may be interested in two bits of anecdotal confirmation of items in the article, one about good atheists and one about bad secondary sources.

I too had the good fortune to study under Brand Blanshard at Yale, and I lament the passing of his species: the utterly honest, hard-headed, rationalist atheist. Contrary to his intent, he contributed powerfully to the development of my faith as well as my reason.

I presented a very inadequate and elementary paper on Aquinas' view of faith and reason, and Blanshard revealed both his ignorance of Aquinas and his honesty when he reacted to it with great interest and even admitted that if what I said was correct he had "perhaps been mistaken all his life" about the impossibility of any synthesis between religious faith and philosophical reason. He was a Hegelian "absolute idealist," and I still have his 185 careful comments on a 50-page epistemology paper of mine that defended "naïve realism," the farthest possible position from his. His final comment: "This is a remarkably intelligent defense of a totally unintelligent position. I give it Highest Honors. I would give the same grade to the Charge of the Light Brigade."

What I found most revealing in Magee's account was the exposé of the dominance of secondary sources in fashionable scholarship.

The sad thing is not merely the irrelevance but the arrogance; the priority of secondary literature over primary becomes not merely a loss of data but a loss of innocence, even among undergraduates. I once taught a Great Books course to freshmen honor students at Boston College in which I tried to focus the class on exposing common misconceptions about the classics by going back to the data. For example, since they all thought the Middle Ages believed the universe was small and cozy, we read the passage in Ptolemy's *Almagest* where he concludes that the universe is unimaginably vast, and calls the whole earth (which Eratosthenes had accurately measured as about 8,000 miles in diameter) a needle prick compared with the universe; and we read Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, which popularized this idea; and even a typical sermon that used the idea to show how great God was to have created such an enormous universe.

One other example: we read the Tawney-Weber thesis that Calvinism contributed to capitalism and the Puritan work ethic by its doctrine of predestination, since Calvinists were encouraged to work very hard so that their riches, as their just reward, would be evidence that they were the elect. So we went to the source and read Calvin himself. We found that he sounded like many another late-medieval moralist. He quotes Jesus about the dangers of money. The work ethic is there, but not to prove that you're predestined, and certainly not to get rich. Rather, it's to keep busy so the Devil doesn't tempt you (and also so that you don't become one of those Catholic contemplatives).

Came final exam time, I tested how well these testings of student prejudices by primary sources had taken hold. Unknown to my students, I assigned odd numbers to all the questions about these matters, which we had gone over in class. All even-numbered questions were about material we had not gone over in class but which they were responsible for picking up on their own, which I expected would be more difficult. But the class average on the even-numbered questions was an A. The class average of the odd questions was a D. "True or false: the Middle Ages believed the earth to be flat and the universe to be small." "True or false: Calvin taught that riches assured you that you had been predestined to salvation." Almost the entire class blithely marked both questions "true" even though we had exposed them in class. When I confronted them with this fact, they seemed confused. Pressed, a few said they could not believe I had been serious—either the test or the textual exposés in class must have been some kind of trick. One student said, "I went to Harvard for a year and all the books there said the Middle Ages thought the universe was small." That's the rubric: Harvard trumps Ptolemy.

Peter Kreeft
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

In his fine article Edward T. Oakes gives warm praise to Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson. He then says that they had appointments at "Harvard, Princeton, and the Universities of Toronto and Chicago." Alas, Chicago does not deserve to be included in that list. Although Professor Jerome Kerwin invited Maritain to give the Walgreen lectures (subsequently published as *Man and the State*) at the University, he received no appointment. Nor did Gilson. At that time the philosophy department was content to skip, with a few quick stops in between, from Plato and Aristotle to Descartes. It had no sympathy with Thomism. It was left to other departments to impart matters favorable to Catholic philosophy.

Maritain did enjoy a long stay at Princeton, marred only by attacks launched against him and other distinguished faculty members in the mid-fifties by Father Hugh Halton, O.P., the Catholic chaplain. Among other charges, Fr. Halton said that Maritain had an "ability to coexist in a conspiracy of silence with intrinsically evil teaching." In 1957 the board of trustees of the University withdrew its official recognition of Fr. Halton.

James Finn
New York, New York

Edward T. Oakes replies:

I thank James Finn not just for correcting my error but for the bit of

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Princeton history he added. My impression that Jacques Maritain had (at least a brief) stint at Chicago came not only from reading *Man and the State* but also from the enthusiasm for his work expressed by Robert Hutchins, its president at the time, as well as by Mortimer Adler.

I know well whereof Peter Kreeft speaks, and in fact have a rather guilty conscience about purveying some of the errors of the Received Wisdom myself from time to time until my further reading informed me how deceived I (and my hapless students) had been. But perhaps this is a good time to register a demurral against a too vigorous polemic against secondary literature. I say this not only because I have written my own quite secondary and entirely derivative work on Hans Urs von Balthasar (when faced with his greatness I feel no shame in "deriving" what I can), but also because I can recall works on major thinkers that have bracingly changed my outlook on them. I am thinking here of such works as Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato*, Martha Nussbaum's *The Fragility of Goodness*, Peter Berkowitz's *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, or for that matter Bryan Magee's own monograph on Schopenhauer. Also, I think some major philosophers (Locke, for example) write prose so dry and sawdust-ridden that undergraduates might risk losing interest in philosophy altogether if primary sources proved to be their only diet. I don't have a solution to the problem, except to hope that the much-touted "free marketplace of ideas" will drive out the errors (hence my gratitude for Mr. Finn's correction). Unfortunately, Professor Kreeft's anecdotes make me suspect that, on the contrary, Gresham's Law rules—not just in the undergraduate classroom but, as Magee makes clear, in the faculty lounge.

Although Mr. Nolder might be reading more into my closing peroration in praise of Bryan Magee's book (and life) than I had really intended, his reply raises interesting questions. If a blade of grass can give glory to God by its sheer existence, then the same must apply a fortiori to human beings, irrespective of their beliefs. Of course, those humans who strive in all their actions to do the will of God give, in the language of St. Ignatius of Loyola, "greater" glory to God. But would that also not apply across the board? Does not a philosophy like Plato's or Aristotle's give "greater" glory to God than the dreary atomism of Democritus or Lucretius? Of course, such an encomium implies that the theist (for whom such praise is alone meaningful) finds the work of Plato or Aristotle more amenable to his life of belief than the alternative on offer in Greek and Roman antiquity.

What most impressed me about Magee's book (and life, insofar as it was revealed in the book) was his consistent honesty in pursuing the issues of perennial philosophy as far as his own hesitant agnosticism would take him. Nietzsche speaks in one of his more scathing passages of professors as "smoking heads" who use scholarship as a narcotic: "The proficiency of our finest scholars, their heedless industry, their heads smoking day and night, their very craftsmanship—how often the real meaning of all this lies in the desire to keep something hidden from oneself." I praised Magee's life precisely because he stands as an exception to that indictment; and for that reason I think he is much more religious, in the proper sense of the word, than Mr. Nolder seems to allow.

The Uses of the Liberal Arts

It is hard to raise sufficient polemical steam over what many may consider a nice distinction, but Peter J. Leithart's "For Useless Learning" (November 2000) embodies such a peculiarly evangelical (i.e., skewed) approach to the arts and learning that I could not let it pass without comment.

What Professor Leithart attempts in the first half of his article—to demonstrate that the liberal arts are, in essence, useless and that this essential uselessness is the very quality that makes their study and practice worthy—he undermines in the second. Wanting to shun the constraints of popular utilitarianism, that most Protestant of impulses to explain worth in terms of use and use in terms of personal advancement, Prof. Leithart nevertheless succumbs to the very error he wishes to avoid. True, we do not read poetry because it is economically or politically useful, but does it follow that poetry's worth is that it helps us "to read Psalms and Proverbs with understanding"?

Are science and philosophy truly indulged because they "provoke wonder at God's creation," the study of music pursued "so that we can offer a sacrifice of praise," languages taught "so that students can gain a more accurate grasp of the Word"? This is the utilitarian principle at its evangelical best: evaluating and explaining learning and the arts in terms of their personal usefulness, in particular, in terms of what they do for an individual's personal piety. This is the liberal arts as a morning quiet time.

There is no need to deny that the liberal arts may have these uses—I believe they do—but such uses do not define, as Prof. Leithart asserts, an authentic Christian education. Mark Noll once observed that the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there isn't any, and it is my conviction, as one who grew up in the evangelical world, that such a scandal exists primarily because evangelicals have defined learning and the arts by the same utilitarian purposes outlined by Prof. Leithart. Now the scandal will not be erased by retreating to a philosophy of art for art's sake, learning for the sake of learning, a uselessness sufficient unto itself. At best this is intellectual misdirection, at worst it's idolatry. But a true Christian education must begin with the understanding that the objects of liberal studies are worthy in themselves, in their unique being; worthy, not as an end

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in themselves, but because they fill their proper place in God's cosmos.

The goal of Christian education should be to bring the student into an encounter with the incarnational truth and power of the poem, the novel, the painting, the sonata, the scientific treatise. These human artifacts do not just tell us about our situation, they mediate it. They are forms of knowing and of participation and, as such, never ceasing to be what they are and because of what they are, they carry the possibility of mediating the Divine, sacramentally manifesting and communicating God's presence—or not, which also is a form of knowing.

Lee A. Steven
Fredericksburg, Virginia

Peter J. Leithart replies:
If I read him right, Mr. Steven disagrees with me less than he thinks. Nowhere in my article do I say or imply that the liberal arts are to be evaluated by "what they do for an individual's personal piety." I certainly do not believe in any sort of dichotomy of nature and supernature, and the inspiration behind the article was less evangelical than Augustinian ("plundering the Egyptians" and all that). My list of the "uses" of liberal studies was not intended as exhaustive, but was a set of gestures, clumsy ones perhaps, toward the conclusion (explicitly stated in the article) that "liberal studies can be shaped into instruments of worship." This does not seem too distant from Mr. Steven's sacramental understanding of the liberal arts as means for "communicating God's Presence."

The Better Part of Valor

In While We're At It (December 2000), Richard John Neuhaus criticizes the Bishop of Lafayette, Louisiana, for giving in to pressure from black parents to remove the writings of Flannery O'Connor from a high school reading list because of the use of the "n" word. I don't know any bishops, but from what I've read their problems are mostly administrative, not spiritual. As one who once made his living as an administrator, I empathize with them.

The Bishop of Lafayette seems to have been thrust into a situation wherein his choice was to be accused either of being a "racist" or of "un-Christian cowardice." The man was responsible for a diocese, not just a school, and he did the right thing. The Bishop could have tried explaining to the "ballistic" parents why they were wrong to feel offended. But that's the problem: their anger reflected feelings, not thinking.

That the students will not be introduced to Flannery O'Connor (or Mark Twain or Harper Lee or Stephen Benet or Joseph Conrad, or anybody else who ever used the "n" word) is a culture war casualty.

John N. Buckley
West Des Moines, Iowa

A Charitable Misreading?

Richard John Neuhaus asks after reading Jacques Barzun's new book, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, "Where does Jacques Barzun stand?" ("What Jacques Barzun Believes, Maybe," Public Square, December 2000) He finds no personal credo in Barzun's new book. "Answers are elusive," says Father Neuhaus, "for Barzun is sometimes coy, and he tries always to describe sympathetically intellectual and cultural movements of the most maddening diversity."

Fr. Neuhaus wants to know what Barzun's "anchor" is as he sorts through the "maddening diversity" of ideas presented in his new book. He finds a clue in Barzun's comment that "the current submission to the absurd is a taking within life, not outside it." Fr. Neuhaus wonders if Barzun's appeal to what is "outside life" might be a belief in some incipient form of monotheism. He hopes Barzun will tell us if this is so "in his next book."

Well, we need not wait. In his popular book *A Stroll With William James* (1983), Barzun movingly confesses his polytheistic creed:

> In my time of crisis (if that is the right name for the devastation of a child's richly peopled world during the war of 1914) death superabundant and the rest of life endlessly disordered induced at last a suicidal state and swept away all but the verbalisms of the creed trustingly learned earlier. But having become "twice born" in the Jamesian sense and gained self-acceptance "through altered powers of action," I found with it the germ of an affinity with a multiple, unorganized transcendence. I am to this extent a Nietzsche-Shaw-James kind of believer; that is, persuaded of the manifold divine. I feel myself obedient to "spirit," knowing that from it alone come the things that justify life—things, in Nietzsche's words, "transfiguring, exquisite, mad, and divine." Polytheism (which this is) has always been, as James points out, "the real religion of common people"; it was also that of the heads of the old church when they were not theologians. . . . By contrast, the single, all-powerful God, founder and efficient executive of the universe, has for me the thinness of abstraction. And when its faint outline is partly filled with liturgy and prayer, it seems to me the mirror-image of monarchy, calling for servility and praise too fulsome to be sincere, which . . . is coupled with the unedifying morality of a stockbroker, who denies himself on earth so as to invest in heavenly options.

It seems that Fr. Neuhaus was misled by those lingering verbalisms from Barzun's childhood faith that

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still are around in even his latest masterpiece. Fr. Neuhaus apparently also erred in supposing that the diversity of Barzun's hefty new volume was maddening. Being a polytheist, Barzun apparently found that buzzing multiplicity rather to be salutary. So he concludes that "the mystery in things remains overwhelming enough without extending it to what is offered as explanation," viz., "that divinity is ineffable Being."

(The Rev.) Ronald F. Marshall
First Lutheran Church
of West Seattle
Seattle, Washington

RJN replies:
Pastor Marshall may be right. But that was 1983 and maybe Mr. Barzun has given these matters better thought since then. That is what I tentatively inferred from his latest book, but then my besetting fault is to err on the side of charity.

Ash Wednesday

Little Saint Mary's Church, Cambridge

Here lyeth . . . (Sarah?) *Drake* beneath the floor,
a Persian carpet lapped across her stone
so all you see is *–rah*, and *Cambridgeshire*,
and that she was the cherished wife of someone
who caused her to sleep before the altar
like Samuel, given up to night and God.
Mutely, being dead, she bears the thurifer
who stands on her and swings his silver pod
of incense like a pendulum. What time
is it, six feet down? How long did they
tell her the wait would be? And is her name
written where it matters, legibly,
or will we all, given the same name—*Dust*—
forget at last who was forgotten first?

Sally Thomas

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This Time

Ecumenical Conundrums

James Nuechterlein

Ecumenism—or at least ecumenism rightly understood (definition supplied below)—is not an optional matter for Christians. It is a necessary obedience to the will of Christ that his followers might all be one. But I have to confess to a good deal of confusion as to how precisely we are called to work out that mandate in practice.

On January 25 I participated, as I normally do, in my Manhattan neighborhood's annual ecumenical service in observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is an occasion I generally look forward to not quite with dread, but not with eager anticipation, either. It's more like grim duty—you *will* love your brothers and sisters in Christ. The congregations that participate are an odd lot—Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Quaker, and Mennonite—and the services are typically the incoherent hodgepodge you would expect when negotiating among traditions ranging from Rome to the left wing of the Reformation. Most of the time I leave those services less committed to ecumenism than when I walked in.

As it happens, this year was mostly an exception. There were, to be sure, jarring moments. The entrance procession featured a nun—the service was at a Catholic parish—carrying the altar candle while performing a silly, strained liturgical dance that was at once laughable and offensive. There were two terrible hymns, the one unsingable, the other inane. (Where *do* Catholics get their song books?) But, unlike some years, there were a number of grace notes. We confessed our sins, not our failures to be sufficiently leftward in our politics, and the prayers were prayers, not harangues directed less to God than to ourselves for not being . . . sufficiently leftward in our politics.

Then there was the sermon. At ecumenical gatherings of this sort there can, of course, be no eucharist, and so the service focuses on the homily. In previous years, one was grateful if one endured only banality, not heresy. This year, by the luck of the draw, my Lutheran pastor delivered the sermon. Her message exemplified what ecumenism, rightly understood, consists of: not a trafficking in neo-Unitarian generalities, but an affirmation, across denominational boundaries, of the central truths of the Great Tradition. She did not hide her Lutheran particularities, but she wove them into themes no orthodox Christian would deny. I left the service genuinely uplifted, but aware that next year, come sermon time, I may well again be forced into cringe mode.

But ecumenism presents quandaries not only when it attempts to find common ground among the broadest range of communions that might plausibly claim Christian patrimony. Even within the Great Tradition, apparently insuperable obstacles arise.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II also presided at a January 25 observance of commitment to Christian unity. His homily on the occasion—before a congregation that included representatives of the Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist communions—acknowledged that separations between Christians are "contrary to the will of Christ"; those separations, he went on, "are scandalous and weaken the voice of the gospel." At the same time, he said, "we cannot and should not diminish the differences that still exist between us. True ecumenical commitment does not seek compromises and makes no concessions on truth." In a similar vein, my colleague RJN in a piece in this month's Public Square suggests that "the only unity . . . that can be pleasing to God is unity in the fullness of the truth that Christ intends for his Church."

Where does that leave us? Authoritative voices insist that our divisions are scandalous violations of God's will. But they also insist that unity can come only when there is full agreement not only in doctrine but also, as RJN says, "in ordered ministry." Which is to say, I can only infer, that Christian unity is an eschatological project.

I intend no disrespect to my Catholic friends when I say that their solution to the problem of division among Christians is, despite their protests to the contrary, that all the rest of us should come home to Rome. Indeed, as best I can see, they have to say that to be faithful to their church's self-understanding. Nor is that a solution that non-Catholic orthodox Christians can dismiss out of hand. Catholicism, after all, has imposing claims: Western Christians who are serious about the continuity of the Church through time require plausible reasons not to accept the supremacy of Rome. Heirs of the Reformation cannot continue their separation simply out of habit.

I understand and respect the decision of a number of my former fellow Lutherans to follow their catholicity to Catholicism. But that path is not open to all of us. I cling to my Lutheran identity for reasons that, I trust, go beyond habit. I have outlined those

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reasons in these pages before, and I will not repeat them here. Suffice it to say that the more closely I meditate on the matter, the more I conclude that between Lutherans and Catholics there exist, for all our common adherence to the Great Tradition, significant differences in doctrine and piety. Significant to what extent? Not so significant, I conclude, that I could not commune at a Catholic altar—should I be admitted, as I am not—but significant enough that to forsake my Lutheranism for Catholicism would be an exercise in bad faith.

There's my problem—and there, of course, is far more than my problem, or it would not be worth talking about. A great number of us believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and yet believe—it is the only way we can make sense of Christian history—that that one Church has many manifestations in time.

Under such circumstances, how does one fulfill the ecumenical mandate? Among other things, by continuing to insist, inside and outside our denominational boundaries, that there is indeed a Great Tradition—C. S. Lewis' "mere Christianity"—that we are all called to witness to and uphold. That tradition encompasses all who, to put it simply, can recite the Nicene Creed without entering endless mental reservations. More immediate exercises in ecumenism include the Evangelicals and Catholics Together initiative—worth support even from those of us who are neither evangelical Protestants nor Catholics, and thus can only offer encouragement from outside.

But note that all such activities are but quasi-ecumenical. None of them meets the problem of the lack of "a common eucharistic life" that Bruce D. Marshall so eloquently engages in "Who Really Cares About Christian Unity?" (FT, January). (Mainstream Protestantism is awash in eucharistic fellowship, but it is a fellowship that appears quite insouciant as to the substance of what in fact transpires in the eucharist.) And, given Rome's firm position on the issue—a position I at once understand and wish could be relaxed—it is difficult to imagine any possible circumstances in which, among adherents of the Great Tradition, eucharistic fellowship might be achieved.

It is that tragic circumstance—and I am not being histrionic here—that we are confronted with. I am regularly moved to despair over the fact that I cannot share the sacrament with brothers and sisters in Christ with whom I feel the deepest involvement. But, for the life of me, I know no way to make that wrong thing right. FT

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Opinion

The Politics of Incivility

Raymond J. de Souza

It was perhaps the most unusual statement in a political year full of surprises. Stockwell Day, new leader of a new conservative political party, the Canadian Alliance, was under attack for his evangelical Christian faith, and sought relief from a hostile press corps by attempting a *reductio ad absurdum*.

"There is scientific support for both creationism and evolution," said Day, responding to attacks on his alleged fundamentalism. "But I don't think that I should have to debate the interpretation of Genesis any more than I would expect Jean Chrétien or Joe Clark [leader of the Progressive Conservative Party] to debate Catholic teaching on transubstantiation or the Immaculate Conception."

Day's gambit didn't work. His opponents were asked no questions about the Immaculate Conception. Instead, an infamous Liberal Party spin doctor showed up on the TV talk shows with a stuffed toy dinosaur, a prop to mock evangelical Christians' supposed belief that dinosaurs and humans lived at the same time. Theology did not fare well during the federal election in Canada late last year.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien of the Liberal Party was reelected last November 27—his third straight majority government. That was expected. The surprise was that the so-called moral and religious questions—abortion, homosexuality, public funds for private religious schools—were being discussed at all. Social conservatism was on the agenda in Canada for the first time. That alone was a notable step forward, even if social conservatives got hammered with intemperate and bigoted attacks such as are rarely seen in this nation known for its niceness.

Intense regional and linguistic debates have dominated politics in Canada for at least three decades. On economic issues there has been for the most part a center-left consensus, while there hasn't been any debate at all on social or moral issues—the secular-libertine mindset has been regnant and beyond challenge. Conservatives challenged the prevailing economic policy in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, and as a result the federal government and several provinces began to take seriously free trade, tax reform (and more recently, even tax cuts), elimination of deficit spending, and cuts to social assistance programs. For social conservatives out to trim the abortion license or to protect the traditional family, however, that famous Canadian compassion and accommodation was in short supply.

It is difficult for outsiders to understand the extent to which secular libertinism grips the major institutions of Canadian politics, law, media, and academia. Since 1988, when the Supreme Court struck down the country's not-very-restrictive abortion law, there has been no abortion law in Canada. The result: abortion on demand, fully paid for by the state-financed health care system. The Canadian Court has embraced abortion with an enthusiasm that would make the American Supreme Court blush, ruling *unanimously* that even a child in the birth canal is not a person entitled to legal rights (the case arose from a botched delivery). On homosexuality, the Court did not content itself merely with striking down laws, but actually gave itself the power to amend the Ontario Human Rights Code so that it would be read "as if" homosexual orientation were a prohibited ground of discrimination. During oral arguments at the Court in November 2000, Supreme Court justices ridiculed as untenable the Christian maxim of loving the sinner while hating the sin. Theology does not do too well at the Supreme Court, either.

The sheer ordinariness of all this is most extraordinary. Even Canadians who follow politics would be hard-pressed to name any Supreme Court justices—despite the reach of their decisions, they are not really controversial. For the most part, Canadian governments, both federal and provincial, have been content to follow the Court's direction, if not grateful for its leadership. Social conservatives in Canada have frequently complained that it's not so much that arguments are being lost as that they are not even being had.

That began to change in the mid-1990s, when press baron Conrad Black bought most of Canada's major daily newspapers and reoriented them toward a more balanced position on both economic and social issues. Social conservatives were no longer shut out of the national debate. In 1998, Black launched a new national daily, the *National Post*, which sought from its first issue to fashion a new political coalition that would challenge both the ruling Liberal Party and the regnant cultural consensus. The goal was to bring together Canada's admittedly small social conservative base with the larger economic conservative base that had been growing in both the West and in Ontario. The splintering of those groups—along with the numerous other

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fissures that are a feature of Canadian politics—has been principally responsible for allowing the Liberals to win majority governments with no more than 40 percent of the popular vote.

In 2000 that effort bore fruit. The Reform Party, well established in the West and home for most of Canada's social conservatives, reinvented itself as the Canadian Alliance in an attempt to win over voters from the Progressive Conservative Party. The PCs, who were in power in the 1980s, had been reduced to a parliamentary rump in the elections of 1993 and 1997, but still drew enough of the conservative vote to prevent a breakthrough for the Reform Party. The Alliance chose itself a new leader, the telegenic Stockwell Day, who established his economic credentials as Treasurer of Alberta, delivering budget surpluses and tax cuts. Day was also an unabashed Christian who did not hide his pro-life, pro-family beliefs. And while the official Alliance platform only called for a national referendum (and then only in response to a citizens' initiative) on abortion, Canada's weary pro-life forces convinced themselves that Day represented, well, a new day in Canada.

During his campaign to become Alliance leader last spring, Day attempted something completely new in Canadian politics—a substantive discussion on the role of religious faith in the life of an elected official. His groundbreaking speech on the subject was not a reprise of John F. Kennedy in Houston or Mario Cuomo at Notre Dame, despite what some of his advisers wanted. Instead, Day, a genuine intellectual, outlined a vision of the "public square" that would be very familiar to readers of First Things.

"I have no intention of turning my religion into someone else's law," he said. "I support the separation of church and state, but I would oppose any suggestion that I ought to separate myself from my faith in order to participate in the government of the state."

Having said that, Day signaled over the summer that he was no scold. He smiled a lot, never brought up "divisive" issues on his own, and generally focused on exhibiting his athletic physique by chopping wood, roller-blading, jet-skiing, and even driving in a monster truck pull. He also continued his fourteen-year habit of refusing to campaign on Sundays. He presented himself as a conservative who was also a Christian family man. And that he was fun.

In response, the chattering classes ceased chattering and bared their fangs. The 2000 election campaign put to rest any notion that tolerance defined Canadian politics. The secular consensus went on the attack. Viciousness in the defense of tolerance cloaked itself as virtue.

Hedy Fry, a Vancouver Liberal and the federal Minister of Multiculturism—a sort of tolerance czar—got right to the heart of the matter, declaring that Day's belief that "Jesus Christ is the God of the whole universe" was "an insult to every Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, [and] everybody else who believes in other religions." Fry did not take up what kind of god would be god of only part of the universe, but her point was clear enough: in the universe of acceptable Canadian political discourse there was no room for orthodox Christians. Elinor Caplan, a Toronto Liberal and the federal Minister of Immigration—another bastion of tolerance—outdid her cabinet colleague by saying that Day's supporters were bigots and racists, and of course, Holocaust deniers. The *Toronto Star* piled on with the Nazi allusions, and the *Globe and Mail* (an economically conservative, socially liberal national daily) devoted pages and pages to barely concealed glee in lampooning Day's evangelical Christianity.

Far from reining in his cabinet ministers and spin doctors, the Prime Minister gave them a wink and a nod. For his part, Jean Chrétien chose a Catholic high school to reaffirm his support for abortion on demand, compounding the affront by joking that his wife was too old to have abortions anyway. Both Chrétien and Joe Clark made abortion a campaign issue—a departure from the usual Canadian custom of silence on the matter. Indeed, while both the Liberal and PC parties had previously attempted an ambiguous nonposition on abortion, in 2000 both Chrétien and Clark declared themselves foursquare for the extreme abortion license. Consequently, Canadians were treated to the curious sight of two Catholics attacking an evangelical Christian as a threat to "abortion rights."

There were disapproving voices, among them Lawrence Martin, Chrétien's sympathetic biographer, who charged him with conducting a campaign that was "not only cynically timed, but cynically executed." Various other columnists clucked about the antireligious rhetoric, but for the most part the outrage was limited to pro-life websites and polite press releases from aggrieved parties muttering their disapproval. The voice of the churches barely registered. Christians and social conservatives were finally in the town square, but they remained strangely passive while their opponents gave them a public flogging.

It would be a mistake to overstate the role of religion and related issues in the campaign—in a time of prosperity and budget surpluses, incumbency was advantage enough for victory, even without a fractured opposition that by all accounts mounted a flawed campaign. Nevertheless, the eruption of the whole religion-and-politics question bears watching as a potentially promising sign for the future.

Despite the avalanche of abuse heaped upon it, the Canadian Alliance emerged from the election beaten

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but not buried. The new party increased its share of the popular vote markedly from the last election—more so than any other party—demonstrating that religion-bashing is not as effective as its practitioners might hope. More particularly, the party increased its share of the conservative vote over against the PCs, even if not sufficiently to result in a large increase in parliamentary seats. That being said, social conservatives—especially those informed by Christian social teaching—will need to learn some lessons from the tumultuous year 2000. Already the conventional wisdom is inviting Day and his allies to seek victory by means of surrender.

"You cannot have a successful political party with social conservatism," advised Brian Mulroney, the Progressive Conservative prime minister from 1984 to 1993. While before the election Mulroney was hostile to both the Reform Party and its successor, the Canadian Alliance, he now favors a merger with his own PCs, provided that the "divisiveness" of social conservatism is junked.

Mulroney may be right, but the results of election 2000 don't bear him out—at least not yet. Election 2000 proved beyond doubt that social conservatives will face intense and nasty attacks should they show any prospect of making gains. It also showed that if those attacks are suffered for the most part in silence, they will have a limited but not fatal effect. What remains to be seen is what would happen if social conservatives were to fight back.

Abortion provides the clearest example. The Canadian Alliance paid the price for being against abortion, but its pro-life position was so weak that it did not attract voters who are troubled by the more extreme aspects of the abortion license in Canada. Day's response to the attacks—"Abortion isn't even on the platform of the party"—gave him the worst of both worlds. Next time round, pro-life forces will have to offer something that puts the other side on the defensive—whether it is a ban on partial-birth abortion, a limitation of public funding, or even simple regulatory enforcement that would end the current de facto exemption of abortion clinics from the standard regulation of private health care facilities in Canada.

More broadly, social conservatives can no longer content themselves with moaning about exclusion from Canadian public life. It is clear that they are no longer going to be ignored—at least not while Stockwell Day is on the scene—and so they must choose whether they will fight back or will just passively accept the role of bogeyman for the secular libertines. It should be de rigueur that any politician or journalist who treats believing Christians as the equivalent of Nazi sympathizers will face a united front of religious spokesmen who will condemn antireligious bigotry and demand consequences.

That is not the case today in Canada, but it could be. One of Day's most surprising successes was his ability to bring together socially conservative Christians with like-minded allies among Orthodox Jews as well as Muslims. In fact, Day was endorsed by the Supreme Islamic Council of Canada, and the Alliance had more ethnic and religious minority candidates than any other party. Yet so new was this coalition that it was not able to establish an effective common voice. The leadership of the Christian churches in Canada will be critical to any such common voice, and a good place to begin would be for the various churches to at least defend their own when the viciousness is directed their way. Canadians do think of themselves as a tolerant people and will be open to being reminded when their political and cultural elite betray one of their most cherished civic virtues.

Despite the political excitement of 2000, social conservatives in Canada need to see politics as the result of social change, not its principal cause. It is arguable that the pro-life movement in Canada has focused its limited resources on pursuing unattainable (in the short term) political change, while neglecting the necessary work of building alliances. Pro-life forces need to defend those in public who are working gradually to point out that the unlimited abortion license is not what most Canadians say they want. Regarding the homosexual rights movement, social conservatives have not been bold enough in the public square, even though most Canadians already agree with their argument. One of the promising signs of the 2000 political season was the ability of Day to draw together many pockets of social conservatism—evangelical pro-lifers, Catholic homeschoolers, Orthodox Jews concerned about private religious schools, immigrant Sikhs and Muslims worried about family breakdown—who previously felt unwelcome participating in public debate. The hope is not that all such groups will be converted into partisan cells—social conservatives, of all people, ought not inflate the importance of politics—but that they will bring their presence to bear in a way that challenges the monopoly on political discourse currently enjoyed by the secularist elite.

The secular libertine argument will always be made—the chattering classes will chatter. But it is possible now, at it was not ten years ago, for social conservatives to have a voice. It is true that beleaguered pro-life and pro-family forces in Canada, including the Christian churches, have been shot at so often that they are understandably gun-shy. But while understandable, that cannot serve as a perpetual excuse.

Things are changing in Canada. Election 2000 was the first time the Immaculate Conception was ever mentioned. One presumes—and hopes—that will not

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happen again. Theology is not meant for election campaigns, but its appearance last year was an indication that what comes next in Canadian politics may well be a pleasant change for those who are religiously engaged.

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Educating for Marriage, Sort Of

Dana Mack

In the past ten years a promising trend has taken hold. Divorce rates have leveled off, premarital sexual activity rates are declining, and surveys show that hopes for future marital satisfaction and permanence among the young are high. A 1997 Louis Harris poll, for example, revealed that 94 percent of college freshmen considered a happy marriage among their most important life goals. And more than three-quarters believe present laws make divorce too easy to procure. Americans are seriously interested in reviving a culture of stable marriage.

Part of this renewed interest has been stimulated by public policy makers who, recognizing the troubling social, emotional, and economic legacy of divorce, have decided to act. Determined to test new ways to encourage lasting marriages, they have directed many of their efforts toward encouraging marriage preparation programs in schools and churches. Florida has taken the lead here. Finding that "the state has a compelling interest in educating its citizens with regard to marriage and, if contemplated, the effects of divorce," the Florida Marriage Preparation and Preservation Act of 1998 provides a discount on marriage license fees to couples who take marital preparation courses. The state has also commissioned a scholarly evaluation of such courses, and has mandated high schools to incorporate marriage instruction as part of an existing required course in life management skills.

The push for high school marriage preparation is especially encouraging. But it would be more effective if the leaders of the marriage preservation movement—in Florida and elsewhere—saw marriage education in its broadest light, as an introduction to the history, cultural richness, social utility, and civic meaning of marriage as an institution. Unfortunately, what passes for marriage preparation in the thousands of schools and churches around the country that currently offer it to teenagers is not marriage preparation at all.

In a recently published report entitled *Hungry Hearts: Evaluating the New Curricula for Teens on Marriage and Relationships*, I examined ten self-proclaimed marriage preparation programs used in over two thousand middle and high schools across the country. These curricula focus almost entirely on building "relationship skills"—a form of communications training that presents students with a set of scripts designed to foster honesty, tact, negotiation, sympathy, and compromise in interpersonal confrontations. This training is not exactly in how to make better marriages; it treats marriage as a form of relationship and teaches "relationship enhancement" in general—whether at school, at work, in dating, or in the family setting.

Indeed, several programs were not only reluctant to distinguish marriage from other intimate relationships, they even avoided using the word "marriage" in their lessons. Among the most striking examples was Lori H. Gordon's PEERS—a twenty-six unit high school course in self-exploration and relationship dynamics that only very rarely refers to marriage, although the author is a widely known expert on marriage, and in her dedication page expresses her desire to "improve [young people's] chances for giving and receiving love, and eventually enjoying a happy marriage."

Curiously, of those few curricula that did use the word "marriage" liberally, two spent much of their time issuing to young people strong warnings against getting married. Such was the case with the American Bar Association program, *Partners*, which centered heavily on marital conflict, domestic violence law, and divorce. Similarly, David Olson et al.'s *Building Relationships* contained a multitude of dismal warnings to teenagers about the "risks" of marriage, among them: "In this country, getting into a bad marriage is much easier than getting out of one."

There is nothing wrong in itself about warning young people against precipitous marriages, or giving them instruction in communication skills. Indeed, there may even be a powerful argument for communication skills training as an integral component of marriage preparation. In *Reweaving the Tapestry: Toward a Public Philosophy and Policy for Families*, Don Browning and Gloria Rodriguez aptly observe that in promoting communication skills training, the marriage movement pursues what in the field of political philosophy "Jürgen Habermas calls 'discourse ethics,' the rules and skills governing communication for solving problems and facilitating joint action." "As societies become more differentiated and pluralistic," the

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authors say, "we must all learn more fair and effective ways of communicating—in business, in government, and in everyday practical relations, but first of all within marriage and family."

Nevertheless, there is a problem when high school courses on marriage, in their focus on facilitating communication, ignore those issues particular to marriage and especially relevant to teenagers—for example, the ways in which premarital behavior is likely to affect whom a person marries and whether the marriage will be successful. Perhaps it is a sign of the decay of courtship customs (if we mean by courtship not simply dating, but the conscious, formal process of mate selection) that only one curriculum, Richard Panzer's excellent *RQ: Building Relationship Intelligence*, broaches the subject of teen dating as a rehearsal for mate selection and marriage, or urges premarital sexual abstinence on teens. Indeed, all the other curricula blithely ignore data suggesting that patterns of early sexual involvement and serial pair bonding during the adolescent years are likely to have a negative impact on young people's ability to settle into happy, permanent unions. An especially egregious example is Charlene R. Kamper's *Connections: Dating and Emotions* (ostensibly a companion course to her *Connections: Relationships and Marriage*), which contains only one reference to marriage—and this only in the Foreword to the Teacher's Manual. No attempt is made in this program to set teenage dating in the broader context of courtship and marriage. And the program's mild warnings against premature sexual involvement seem unduly resigned to teen promiscuity.

In pretending that there is no connection between current dating behaviors and young people's ultimate goal of happy, permanent unions, many high school marriage programs do nothing to discourage the kind of casual sex that hardens young people and foments distrust between men and women. But worse, in addressing the challenges of sexually intimate relationships as generic communication problems, these programs may lead young people into believing that communication "skills" are all that it takes to make marriages work. There is little convincing evidence that such skills—e.g., "I statements," "anger rituals," and active listening techniques—are the secret to enduring marriages. In a study of newlyweds published in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, marriage therapist John Gottman and colleagues found that most successful marriages owed little, if anything, to such skills. What evidence we have on successful marriages tends to support the notion that commitment, not communication skills, promotes marital happiness. Researchers Paul Amato and Allan Booth recently found, for example, that couples who entered marriage with "favorable attitudes toward divorce tended to experience declines in relationship quality," whereas those who maintained the view that marriage is for keeps "tended to experience improvements in relationship quality, or at least a slowdown in the gradual decline in marital happiness and interaction that characterizes many marriages."

If attitudes and ideals about marriage are so important, then it would make sense for marriage educators to introduce students to the ways our culture has viewed and promoted this institution. Yet most of these programs instead focus on marriage solely as a private emotional bond, the principal goal of which is self-actualization. Absent are reflections from the fields of sociology, anthropology, or history, and few programs offer literary or aesthetic inspiration that might present marriage as beautiful and encourage teenagers to strive for an enduring, self-forgetting love.

To some extent, the idea that communication skills are the basis of marriage preparation is just part of a general shift in education from teaching cultural narratives and ideal forms to providing technical information and psychotherapeutic advice. In preparing our children for marriage, at least, we would be well-advised to buck this trend. In an age of expressive individualism, as models of marital stability become increasingly rare and young people are uprooted from their culture, marriage educators would do well to go beyond relationship talk, and to persuade young people that marriage is a spiritual, moral, and civic vocation, a universal institution deeply rooted in culture and human instinct, and not just one among many relationships.

In fact, there are resources on the market that offer such a deeper understanding of marriage. *The Art of Loving Well*, a literary anthology of romance and marriage by Nancy McLaren et al., is a wonderful program for young adolescents, enabling them to explore their life goals, sexual values, and family relationships in an aesthetically satisfying context, and at an emotionally safe distance. The American Library Association offers a set of arts and humanities-oriented programs on love, courtship, and marriage. Entitled *Courtly Love in the Shopping Mall*, these programs could easily be adapted for schools and churches. Finally, Leon and Amy Kass' book on courtship, *Wing to Wing: Oar to Oar*, is a welcome source-reader for older high school and college age students. An in-depth exploration of the evolution of Western ideals of courtship and marriage, the book offers profound reflections on the all-important ontological and spiritual dimensions of mate selection and marriage.

It is heartening that such resources are being made available. It will be even more heartening when those

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responsible for teaching marriage preparation begin to use them more widely.

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It Ain't Got That Swing

Hugh Liebert

In 1987 President Reagan invited Miles Davis to a formal dinner at the White House. He went, but wasn't impressed. "[White people in Washington] stay stupid and make me and a lot of other black people feel bad because of their ignorance. And the President sitting up there and don't know what to say. Man, they should have written down something hip for him to say, but they ain't got nobody hip nowhere around him. Just a bunch of mother****ers with plastic smiles, acting all proper and s**t."

Davis' anger wasn't entirely unjustified; conservatives have always had trouble appreciating jazz. In 1934 H. L. Mencken wrote of swing-dancing couples "bumping and grunting over the dance floor like dying hogs in a miasmatic pen"—and that at the height of the Swing Era. Fourteen years later, Richard Weaver called jazz "the clearest of all signs of our age's deep-seated predilection for barbarism."

Times have changed. Mark Gauvreau Judge, author of *If It Ain't Got That Swing*, is a cultural conservative with more swing in his step. Contra Weaver, Judge claims that a recent resurgence of interest in swing music reveals Gen X's predilection for an age less barbaric than its own. The success of bands like Big Bad Voodoo Daddy and Squirrel Nut Zippers, the renewed popularity of ballrooms, commercials, and movies featuring hip, swing-dancing teens—it all adds up to "nothing less than a pop culture revolt against the youth culture of the last forty years."

Although Judge doesn't say as much, *If It Ain't Got That Swing* tries to correct a long-standing oversight that has dangerous implications for conservatism. Judge's apology for neo-swing forces us to ask why conservatives have never much cared for jazz, and, more importantly, to determine precisely what they were missing.

Judge begins by describing Shaw, the Washington, D.C., neighborhood where Duke Ellington grew up. From Ellington's childhood to the heyday of swing in the 1930s and early '40s, Shaw was a close-knit community. Everyone knew each other, no one locked their doors at night, and kids respected their elders.

And they danced. Halls and theaters figured prominently in Shaw's social life, as did a variety of coffee shops, diners, and similar hangouts. Men and women spent a lot of time in these "third places," where they were expected to act like gentlemen and ladies. Swing dancing reflected their manners: dancers dressed well and treated each other with respect.

In Judge's telling, the 1960s brought the "moral deregulation of public space." Families fled Shaw and other communities, commuting along newly built federal highways to nearby suburbs. Inner cities declined as they spent the social capital they had built up. The suburbs, with their picket-fence anomie, couldn't recreate Shaw's swinging public life. A "culture of narcissism" filled the gap. Mick Jagger, that bard of narcissism, overthrew Duke Ellington, tolling the advent of the pop culture dark ages. For some thirty years now America has suffered under the tyranny of poorly dressed, self-righteous, would-be rebels and their oppressive kingdom of noise. This is music for the suburbs, Judge suggests, a soundtrack for lonely bowlers and the spoiled spawn of soccer moms.

But everything changed on April 21, 1998. That evening, a slowly emerging trend lindy hopped onto the national stage when a commercial for Gap khakis featuring a few dozen hip twenty-somethings dancing to the swing song "Jump, Jive & Wail" aired on NBC. Swing dancing had been winning over youngsters since the early nineties, and had even been documented in two popular films, *Swing Kids* (1993) and *Swingers* (1996). But the Gap commercial announced its arrival to a large, receptive audience.

According to Judge, the receptiveness stemmed from a deep-seated dissatisfaction with post-sixties American life. Now swing kids are struggling to revive everything rock, rap, and grunge killed—nice clothes, manners, and class. Judge goes so far as to claim that "swing is the first fad that has kids looking to grandparents and traditional rules for what's hip."

This last claim is tenuous at best, but it reveals where Judge—and the neo-swing movement, for that matter—go wrong. Our grandparents (or more likely, great-grandparents) would find little to admire in the revival of their era's music. Neo-swing is not a genuine recreation of swing, as Judge and many neo-swing musicians believe, but merely a poor imitation. Back then, the conventional wisdom was summed up nicely by the phrase from which Judge takes his title, "it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing"—the implied corollary

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of which is, "as long as it swings, nothing else means a thing." As long as one could dance to it—and one could dance equally well to the music of any group that could keep the beat—the rest, from the perspective of the dancing masses, was icing. The better musicians took full advantage of this fact, wedding a danceable rhythm to challenging harmonics and inspired improvisation, producing a single musical form capable of pleasing aesthetes along with everyone else.

But you'd never know it by listening to today's neo-swing bands. These groups seem to have taken their cue from Swing Era album covers instead of the records inside: they are all swagger and style, the shiny gloss of swing without any of its musical substance. Dancing plays a larger role in neo-swing than in old swing. Judge's book, for example, focuses almost exclusively on swing dancing while being largely deaf to swing music.

The most telling example of Judge's tendency to ignore the *music* of the Swing Era is his inability to see any significant difference between swing and early rock. He writes that in the beginning rock 'n' roll "was just swing music played leaner and tighter," that "Elvis wasn't far from swing music," that the Beatles were "brilliant musicians" just like Art Blakey and John Coltrane. Judge seems to assume that simply because a certain strain of swing developed into rhythm and blues, which led in turn to rock, rock bears a close resemblance to swing. Something has gone dreadfully wrong when one can barely distinguish the artistic mastery of an Ellington, Count Basie, or Jimmy Lunceford from the sort of blues-driven, power chord dependent noise that today's ten-year-olds can play after a few weeks of guitar lessons. Judge is right to praise swing—perhaps more right than he knows. But like most of the neo-swingers, he looks back without listening. And this is a shame, since real swing—not the modern version—deserves more respect from conservatives than it has hitherto received.

Conservative criticism of swing tends to be of two types. First, there are those conservatives, ably represented by Richard Weaver, who question the possibility of post-Christian art altogether. Art was meaningful when people took their bearings from a source of truth higher than and independent of themselves. But without a shared framework of beliefs art cannot help turning into expression and creation for no purpose; in a word, decadence. The artist no longer creates for the greater glory of God. Instead, he allows himself to take the place of God. "In 'swing'," writes Weaver, "one hears a species of music in which the performer is at fullest liberty to express himself as an egoist."

If art detached from transcendental ends is decadent, one must admit that jazz—from its origins in ragtime and Dixieland, to the Swing Era, and to bop and beyond—is a decadent art form. No jazz musician plays for the greater glory of God, nor for any universal idea—at least not consciously so, and probably not unconsciously either, as jazz musicians' consciences are modern through and through. Although church hymns and Negro spirituals had a significant influence on jazz during its infancy, it would be wrong to claim jazz as a Christian art form. Jazz lyrics, for the most part, have little to do with Christian themes; the sentiments jazz inspires bear little resemblance to the agape associated with godly music. Ray Charles' "Hallelujah I Love Her So" is somewhat less edifying than Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

But all decadence is not created equal. Those critics who constantly scream "decadence" whenever they come across modern music drown out the considerable differences between Ellington and Elvis, or, for that matter, between Ellington and Eminem. They miss, in other words, the best features of jazz, those qualities that jazz shares with the art produced in more reverent ages.

Jazz, even in its swing period, is a music of complex harmonics and demanding standards. The artistic mastery achieved by the great jazz masters is comparable, if not superior, to that of the geniuses of classical music. In fact, many of the greatest jazz musicians—Art Tatum, Earl Hines, Benny Goodman—were classically trained. Gunther Schuller, an acclaimed critic of jazz and classical music, writes that "in the classical field, a player of Hines' prodigious gifts, had he been white, would have had a brilliant concert or solo career. Black musicians in the 1920s knew, however, that such prospects were to all intents and purposes precluded." The same could be said of Tatum, whom Rachmaninov is said to have admired.

Weaver acknowledges the technical virtuosity of jazz musicians, but claims nevertheless that such skill only makes jazz more dangerous because more powerful. The power of jazz forces us to recognize its fundamental tendency, which he describes variously as "a triumph of grotesque, even hysterical, emotion over propriety and reasonableness"; a repudiation of restraint by intellect that expresses contempt and hostility toward our traditional society and mores; and a music with sexual and farcical subjects that "shows how the soul of modern man craves orgiastic disorder." If jazz is bent on destroying traditional mores, it does not do so because it is undisciplined music; rather, according to Weaver's argument, jazz is destructive because of the passions it inspires.

But does jazz really inspire men's appetite for destruction? On its face, this claim seems ridiculous. Cole Porter's "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To" is anything but a revolt against traditional mores; Tony

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Bennett's "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" would serve nicely as a musical expression of Weaver's nostalgia for the rootedness of an earlier day. If not an urge to destroy, what sentiments are associated with jazz? Jazz does encourage a certain breed of pride in one's work; swing musicians knew they were playing challenging music, and those who mastered it sought recognition of their talent. For this reason, some of the best musicians of the Swing Era—Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Nat King Cole—took aristocratic nicknames. The best players in each band would take several solos, standing while playing so the crowd could acknowledge them for their skill.

Swing also gives voice to a wholesome sort of romance, usually suffused with a lover's respect and admiration for his love. In fact, several of the most popular songs of the Swing Era were romantic ballads like Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady" or his "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good." Robert Bork praised such songs in *Slouching Towards Gomorrah* when he contrasted the lyrics of the jazz classic "The Way You Look Tonight" with those of Snoop Doggy Dogg's "Horny." But the romantic side of swing is not limited to lyrics, nor to the chivalry and gallantry Judge finds in swing dancing. Rather, there is something romantic in the music itself: the characteristic swing rhythm and syncopation can seem impatient, eager to rush forward, in up-tempo songs; on the other hand, swing's distinctive rhythm hangs on the back edge of each beat in slower songs, making for lovely ballads. A swing ballad moves the listener not so much to lust as to a simultaneously avid and restrained romantic passion. So swing may well be a decadent art form, in Weaver's terms, but this does not mean that it corrodes traditional mores or admirable secular virtues.

The power of records and radio, two technologies born only a few years before swing reached its height, made jazz the first genuinely popular music. The second main conservative criticism of jazz finds such popularity suspicious, affecting an aristocratic disdain for whatever pleases the masses. Mencken, for instance, wrote of swing that "no matter what syncopations may be attempted in the upper parts, the drums and bull-fiddle bang along like metronomes, and that is the thing that soothes and delights the customers. It is music reduced to its baldest elementals, and hence music that they can follow." In this criticism, great art is the province of the few; art for the ill-bred, uneducated hoi polloi as such cannot be great.

Although superficially different, this second criticism is closely related to Weaver's attack on jazz's "decadence." An art that appeals to people regardless of education, taste, or privilege must find a denominator common to the members of its audience—such art will be mediocre, if not low. In a post-Christian age, the only people with access to universal, unchanging, and *high* things are philosophers and those Christians devout enough to live godly lives amidst a host of ungodly influences. Unless most people are already pious, art with wide appeal will have as its end a vulgar sentiment, one that the impious will find good or pleasurable. The universal pleasure par excellence is sex, and so an art at once decadent and popular is likely to be for the greater glory of sex, not God. And in the case of rock music and rap, we see this tendency writ large, as decadence feeds popularity and vice-versa. This second conservative criticism—that a popular music must necessarily be a low music—boasts a distinguished pedigree. Socrates would have told us to expect a universal lowness within a regime devoted to equality. Tocqueville might give similar advice, though perhaps with emphasis on the mediocrity, not necessarily lowness, of democratic art.

But, at least in the case of jazz, such criticisms mislead. Swing, at its best, had the characteristics of *both* aristocratic and democratic music: harmonics and improvisation for aesthetes, and a steady, danceable rhythm for everyone else. So long as this compromise lasted—and it did until the best jazz musicians pushed the tempo to an undanceable pace—swing resembled the ancients' mixed regime, not in speech, but in music.

This, ultimately, is swing's lesson: popularity does not necessarily imply universal mediocrity or lowness; unequal tastes and talents can thrive within a commitment to a common endeavor so long as they respect the limits. Swing music reveals how human excellence happens in democracies. It is not mere coincidence that Weaver expresses deep suspicion of democracy while decrying jazz; to ignore the virtues of the latter is to misunderstand the possibilities of the former. Any conservatism that charges itself with reminding rabid egalitarians of the existence of virtue—a form of inequality they would just as soon forget—cannot afford to criticize swing music. Nor, for that matter, can conservatism afford to praise swing music as Mark Judge does: by waxing nostalgic for the bygone communitarian paradise in which swing first emerged.

Miles Davis' criticism—that conservatives are ignorant when it comes to jazz—was perhaps more prescient than he himself knew. To acknowledge the greatness of swing music is to recognize that human excellence is compatible with pleasing the common man. It is the lesson of swing, and conservatives would do well to listen.

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Clio's Makeshift Laboratory

Wilfred M. McClay

The discipline of history is the science of incommensurable things and unrepeatable events. Which is to say, it is no science at all. We had best be clear about that from the outset. This melancholy truth may be a bitter pill to swallow, especially for those zealous modern sensibilities that crave precision more than they covet accuracy. But human affairs, by their very nature, cannot be made to conform to the scientific method—unless, that is, they are first divested of their humanness.

This is not to criticize the scientific method. It is an admirable thing, when used in the right way, for the right purposes. You can simultaneously drop a corpse and a sack of potatoes off the Tower of Pisa, and together they will illustrate a precise law of science. But such an experiment will not tell you much about the spirit that once animated that plummeting corpse—its consciousness, its achievements, its failures, its progeny, its loves and hates, its petty anxieties and large presentiments, its hopes and aspirations, its moments of grace and transcendence. Physics will not tell you who that person was, or about the world within which he lived. All such things will have been edited out, until only mass and acceleration remain.

By such a calculus our bodies may indeed become indistinguishable from sacks of potatoes. But thankfully that is not the calculus of history. You won't get very far into the study of history with such expectations, unless you choose to confine your attention to inherently trivial or boring matters—in which case, studying the past will soon become its own punishment. One could propose it as an iron rule of historical inquiry: there is an inverse proportion between the importance of the question and the precision of the answer. This is, of course, no excuse to be gassy and grandiose in one's thinking, a lapse that in its own way is just as bad as being trivial. Nor does it challenge Pascal's mordant observation that human beings are, in some respects, as much automatons as they are humans. It merely asserts that the genuinely interesting historical questions are irreducibly complex, in ways that exactly mirror the irreducible complexity of the human condition. Any author who asserts otherwise should be read skeptically (and, life being short, as quickly as possible).

Take, for example, one of the most fascinating of these issues: the question of what constitutes greatness in a leader. The word "great" itself implies a comparative judgment. But how do we go about making such comparisons intelligently? There are no quantitative units into which we can translate, and no scales upon which we can weigh, the leadership quotients of Pericles, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, Attila, Elizabeth I, Napoleon, Lincoln, Stalin, and Lyndon Johnson. We can and do compare such leaders, however—or others like them, such as the long succession of American Presidents—and learn extremely valuable things in the process. But in doing so, we cannot detach these very different leaders from their contexts, treating them as pure abstractions, ignoring relevant details such as whom they were leading, where they were going, and what they were up against. "Leadership" means nothing if not leadership exercised in very specific circumstances. How does one compare a twentieth-century democratic leader with an absolute monarch or tribal chieftain? Yet what is the point in studying the past if each epoch is to be treated as though sealed unto itself? Comparisons are both irresistible and perilous—and the more interesting they are, the more difficult they are. If made entirely without context, comparisons

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become meaningless. But if made entirely within context, comparisons become impossible.

There is, then, a certain quixotic absurdity built into the very task historians have taken on. History strives, like all serious thought, for the clarity of abstraction. We would like to make its insights as pure as geometry, and its phrases as effortless as the song warbled by Yeats' golden bird of Byzantium. But its subject matter—the tangled lives of human beings, in their unique capacity to be both subject and object, cause and effect, active and passive, free and situated—forces us to rule out that goal in advance. Modern historians have sworn off forays into the ultimate. It's just not part of their job description anymore. Instead, their generalizations are always generalizations of the middle range, carefully hedged about by messy qualifications and caveats, and weighted down by a certain plodding literal-mindedness.

This can, and does, degenerate into such an obsession with conscientious nuance that modern historians begin to sound like the Prufrocks of the intellectual world—self-henpecked, timid, and bloodless, never daring to eat a peach unless they are certain that they're doing so in proper context. Historians too often are writing for other historians, consumed by the compulsions and nervous tics of the guild, parsing one another's footnotes, thumping the tub for the latest theoretical gimmickry, heedless of the increasingly remote possibility that there might be a lay reader or two listening in on their seminars and catfights, hoping to find words of wisdom and insight. Yet there is something admirable in this professional modesty, however wrapped in self-absorption it may be. It at least preserves something of the genius of history, which is to remind us of our limits and boundaries, and of the knotty problems that are inherent in any act of self-awareness.

History reminds us that our origins linger on in us. It reminds us that we can never entirely remove the incidentals of our time and place, because they are never entirely incidental. At the same time, it reminds us that this has always been true, for all men and women at all times. In other words, it reminds us that historicity is a part of the human condition. Therefore an appreciation of the past cannot be reached by mere introspection, although it probably cannot be reached without it, and without a wide range of lived experience. C. S. Lewis, who was very far from being a relativist, nevertheless warned against the universalizing oversimplifications of what he called the "doctrine of the Unchanging Human Heart," which posits that "the things that separate one age from another are superficial."

> Just as, if we stripped the armor off a medieval knight or the lace off a Caroline courtier, we should find beneath them an anatomy identical with our own, so, it is held, if we strip off from Virgil his Roman imperialism, from Sidney his code of honor, from Lucretius his Epicurean philosophy, and from all who have it their religion, we shall find the Unchanging Human Heart, and on this we are to concentrate.

None of which is to say that those authors are *reducible* to those attributes, so that Virgil becomes *nothing but* Roman imperialism, as the flat-footed historicists of our age might well contend. Nor is it to deny great literature's power to touch chords of universal humanity, a position for which Lewis would be the least likely of spokesman. It is, however, to point out that such universals as are available to us can be apprehended only through careful attention to particulars. They cannot be reduced to neat propositions, neatly ingested. Like everything worthwhile, generalizations must be earned.

And even if they could be neatly codified, they would not stay that way for long. We can never finally reduce what we know about ourselves to a set of inert propositions, because whatever we know about ourselves, or think we know, becomes a part of what we are, at the moment we come to know it. At the very moment we absorb such propositions, we inch beyond their grip. Self-knowledge is, in that sense, constantly transformative. Writing history is even more so, because it means taking ever-moving aim at an ever-moving target with ever-changing eyes, ever-transforming weapons, and ever-protean intentions. "History," writes the Hungarian-American historian John Lukacs, "by its very nature, is 'revisionist,'" because it is "the frequent, and constant, rethinking of the past," an enterprise that, unlike a court of law, "tries its subjects through multiple jeopardy." The past changes, not only because it is constantly growing, but because the things we need from it change too.

The appropriation of this ever-changing past is, then, a paradoxical undertaking. And it becomes progressively more difficult precisely as one becomes more skilled, knowledgeable, and conscientious. Indeed, it is surprisingly easy to write bad history, and even easier to deliver oneself of crude but profound-sounding historical comparisons. It is easy, for example, for any layman to opine portentously about the ominous parallels between the histories of America and Rome, or between America and the Weimar Republic. And so there may be. But it is very difficult for experienced and knowledgeable historians to specify wherein those parallels are to be found—so hard that, these days, they will almost certainly refuse to try, particularly since they have no professional incentive to do so.

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It is easy, in short, to treat the past as if it were just an overflowing grab bag of anecdotes, and careful professional historians are right to admonish those who do so. But only partly right. For man does not live by pedantry and careful contextualization alone. Historical insight is irreducibly an act of the constructive imagination, as much as it is a science of careful reconstruction. That will always be true, because the leap from a mountain of carefully compiled data to a compelling narrative or a persuasive theory will always be shrouded in mystery, propelled by the ineffable force of what Michael Polanyi called "tacit knowledge," no matter the discipline in which the leap occurs.

And it will always be true, because the writing of history will always take its bearings from the needs of the present. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? So long as history is still a vital intellectual undertaking, indispensable to our civilized existence, then it will always be proper—and necessary—for us to seek out precedents in the past, and to do so energetically and earnestly, not being content to confine the past to a comfortable imprisonment in its own context. Nothing really has changed since Thucydides penned his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, sustained by the fragile hope that it would be consulted by "those who desire an exact knowledge of the past as a key to the future, which in all probability will repeat or resemble the past." Probabilities aside, it remains true that the past's few precedents are the only clues we have about the likely outcomes for similar endeavors in the present and future. Elusive as it is, the past is all we really have to work with, and all we can genuinely know. Clio's laboratory may be disorderly and makeshift. But it has to be, if it is to remain true to the things it studies.

History, then, is a laboratory of sorts. By the standards of science, it makes for a lousy laboratory. No doubt about that. But it is all we have to work with. It is the only laboratory available to us for assaying the possibilities of our human nature *in a manner consistent with that nature.* Far from disdaining science, we should imitate many of its characteristic dispositions—the fastidious gathering and sifting of evidence, the effort to be dispassionate and even-handed, the openness to alternative hypotheses and explanations, the caution in propounding sweeping generalizations. Although we continue to draw upon history's traditional storytelling methods, we also can use sophisticated analytical models to discover patterns and regularities in individual and collective behavior. We even can call what we are doing "social science" rather than history, if we like.

But we cannot follow the path of science much further than that, if only for one stubborn reason: we cannot devise replicable experiments and still claim to be studying human beings rather than corpses. It is as simple as that. You cannot experiment upon human beings, at least not on the scale required to make history "scientific," and at the same time continue to respect their dignity as human beings. To do otherwise is murdering to dissect. It is not science but history that tells us that this is so. It is not experimental science, but history, that tells us how dreams of a "worker's utopia" gave rise to one of the most corrupt tyrannies of human history, or how civilized, technically competent modern men saw fit to place their fellow men in gas chambers. These are not events that need to be replicated. Instead, they need to be remembered, as pieces of evidence about what civilized men are capable of doing, and perhaps by extension about the kinds of political regimes and moral reasonings that seem likely to unleash—or to inhibit—such moral horrors.

Thankfully, not all of history's lessons are so gruesome. The history of the United States, for example, provides one reason to hope for the continuing improvement of the human estate, and such sober hopefulness is, I believe, reinforced by an honest encounter with the dark side of the American past. Hope is not real and enduring unless it is based upon the truth, rather than the power of positive thinking. The dark side is always an important part of the truth, just as everything that is solid casts a shadow when placed in the light.

Chief among the things history should teach us, especially those of us who live nestled in the comfortable bosom of a prosperous America, is what Henry James called "the imagination of disaster." The study of history can be sobering and shocking, and morally troubling. One does not have to believe in original sin to study it successfully, but it probably helps. By relentlessly placing on display the pervasive crookedness of humanity's timber, history brings us back to earth, equips us to resist the powerful lure of radical expectations, and reminds us of the grimmer possibilities of human nature—possibilities that, for most people living in most times, have not been the least bit imaginary. With such realizations firmly in hand, we are far better equipped to move forward in the right way.

So we work away in Clio's makeshift laboratory, deducing what we can from the patient examination and comparison of singular examples, each deeply rooted in its singular place and moment. From the perspective of science, this is a crazy way to go about things. It is as if we were reduced to making deductions from the fragmentary journal of a mad scientist who constructed haphazard experiments at random and never repeated any of them. But the oddness is unavoidable. It indicates how different is the approach to knowledge afforded by the disciplines we call the humanities,

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among whose number history should be included. It also explains why the "results" can so often be murky.

There is not a sinister conspiracy behind this. Our professional historians do not, by and large, go out of their way to be obscure or inaccessible. They are hard-working, conscientious, and intelligent people. But their graduate training, their socialization into the profession of historical writing, and the structure of professional rewards and incentives within which they work have so completely focused them upon the needs and folkways of their guild that they find it exceedingly hard to imagine looking beyond them. Their sins are more like those of sheep than those of wolves.

Add to this, however, the fact that, for a small but increasing number of our academic historians, the principal point of studying the past is to demonstrate that all our inherited institutions, beliefs, conventions, and normative values are arbitrary—"social constructions" in the service of power—and therefore without legitimacy or authority. For them, history is useful not because it tells us about the things that made us who we are, but because it releases us from the power of those very things, and thereby confers the promise of boundless possibility. All that has been constructed can presumably be dismantled and reconstructed, and all contemporary customs and usages, being *merely* historical, can be cancelled. In this view, it would be absurd to imagine that the past should have anything to teach us, or the study of the past any purpose beyond the needs of the present. History's principal value, in this view, is not as a glue but as a solvent.

There is some truth in these assertions. In the first place, scrupulous history cannot be written to please the crowd. And yes, history ought to be an avenue whereby the present escapes from the tutelary influence of the past. But the study and teaching of history ought to be directed not only at the accumulation of historical knowledge and the overturning of myths and legends, but also at the cultivation of a historical consciousness. Which means that history is also an avenue whereby the present can escape, not only from the past, but from the *present*. Historical study ought to enlarge us, deepen us, and draw us out of ourselves, by bringing us into a serious encounter with the strangeness—and the strange familiarity—of a past that is already a part of us.

In drawing us out, it "cultures" us, in all the multiple senses of that word. As such, it is not merely an academic subject or an accumulated body of knowledge, but a discipline formative of the soul. Historians should not forget that they fulfill an important public purpose simply by doing what they do. They do not need to justify themselves by their "practical" contributions to the formulation of public policy. They do their part when they preserve and advance a certain kind of consciousness and memory, traits of character upon which a culture of relentless change and instant erasure has all but declared war. Human beings are by nature remembering creatures, and storymaking creatures. History embraces and affirms those traits, even as it insists upon refining them by the light of truth. To do that alone is to do a great deal, at a time when all the forces seem to be arrayed on the other side.

History cannot do those things, however, unless it continues to be understood as Thucydides understood it, as a search for truth. And that proposition is, so to speak, very much in play. There are two characteristic fallacies that arise when we speak of truth in history, and we should be wary of them both. The first is the confident belief that we can know the past definitively. The second is the resigned conviction that we can never know the past at all. They are, so to speak, the respective fallacies of positivism and skepticism, stripped down to their essences. They are the mirror images of one another. And they are equally wrong.

The first fallacy has lost some of its appeal for academic historians, but rather less with the public. One hears this particular reliance upon the authority of history expressed all the time, and most frequently in sentences that begin, "History teaches us that. . . ." Professional historians and seasoned students, to their credit, tend to cringe at such words. And indeed, it is surprising, and not a little amusing, to see how ready the general public is to believe that history, unlike politics, is an entirely detached, objective, impersonal, and unproblematic undertaking. Not only the unsophisticated make this error. Even the jaded journalists who cover the White House, and the politicians they cover, imagine that the question of a particular President's historical standing will be decided by the impartial "verdict of history." I say surprising and amusing, but such an attitude is also touching, because it betrays such immense naive confidence in the transparency of historical authority. Many people still believe that, in the end, after all has been done and said, History Speaks.

Whatever their folly in so believing, however, it does not justify a movement to the opposite extreme—the dogmatic skepticism and relativism implicit in the second fallacy. That, in its crudest form, is the belief that all opinions are created equal, and since the truth is unknowable and morality is subjective, we all are entitled to think what we wish, and deserve to have our opinions and values respected, so long as we don't insist too strenuously upon their being "true." Such a perspective is not only wrong: because it renders genuine debate and inquiry impossible, it is damaging to the entire historical undertaking.

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Truth is the basis of our common world. If we cannot argue constructively about historical truth and untruth, and cannot thereby open ourselves to the possibility of persuasion, then there is no reason for us even to talk. If we cannot believe in the reasonable fixity of words and texts, then there is no reason for us to write. If we cannot believe that an author has something to offer us beyond the mere fact of his or her "situatedness," then there is no reason for us to read. If we cannot believe that there is more to an author, or a book, than political or ideological commitments, then there is no reason for us to listen. If history ever ceases to be the pursuit of truth, then it will in time become nothing more than self-regarding sentimentalism, which in turn masks the sheer will to power, and the war of all against all.

This description sounds rather dire, but there is no reason to believe that we have reached such a pass, notwithstanding the academy's current multitudinous follies. Our actions as readers and writers of history betray the fact that we continue to believe in these things implicitly, and would be lost without them. And not only as readers and writers of history. It cannot be noted often enough that even high-flying postmodernist (and post-postmodernist) scholars tend to be notoriously literal-minded when it comes to the terms of their contracts. This brute Johnsonian fact offers more of the heft of truth than the collective oeuvre of all the Gallic savants and their epigones. Perhaps it does not reflect especially well on us that we indulge so much patent silliness. It is appalling to think of how much valuable time and talent is thereby wasted, a thought that cannot fail to occur to a sensitive soul contemplating what happens to bright students entering our top-flight graduate programs in the humanities. But serious writing has survived far worse travails, and it will likely survive these too—simply because it addresses itself to profound human needs that cannot be willed away. History's tortoise-like resistance to theory may prove to have been one of its saving graces in a hare-brained era.

Still, we all are better off when we make the effort to acknowledge our actual operating notions and motives—and thereby make them available for rational examination. This need not entail the task of formulating a grand Philosophy of History (too often a grand distraction from actually studying history). It may be enough to remember the two fallacies, which I will for convenience's sake dub the Fallacy of Misplaced Precision and the Fallacy of Misplaced Skepticism, as the extremes we want to avoid. There is a world of difference between saying that there is no truth, and saying that no one is fully in possession of it. Yes, the truth is elusive, and only fleetingly and partially glimpsed outside the mind of God. But it is no folly to believe that the truth *is* there, and that we are drawn by our nature to search endlessly for it. Indeed, the real folly is in claiming otherwise. FT

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The Future of the Papacy: A Symposium

In the February issue First Things *published the Erasmus Lecture of 2000, "Papacy and Power," by George Weigel. The monumental political influence of the pontificate of John Paul II, Weigel argued, is the result of a long and complicated history in which the papacy has successfully contended for the freedom of the Church* (libertas ecclesiae) *even as the Church remains ambiguously engaged as a moral voice within the counsels of nations. The Church, and the papacy in particular, has broken with the "Constantinian" model of power in order to become, in accord with the vision of the Second Vatican Council, the "teacher and evangelist of culture," a role that retrieves and renews the New Testament task of Peter to "strengthen the brethren." We asked six distinguished writers—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Jewish—to respond to Weigel's argument, with special reference to the future of the papacy.*

— The Editors

Russell Hittinger

The inaugural encyclical of every pope from 1791 to 1939, from Pius VI to Pius XII, was devoted to the problem of the state. Even John XXIII and Paul VI felt it necessary in more recent times to make more than passing remarks about modern states in their first encyclicals.

If ever there was a suitable occasion to repeat this pattern, it was upon the election of a Polish pope during the critical years of the Cold War. Instead, John Paul II began a cycle of three letters on the persons of the Trinity. In the first, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), he wrote: "The Church must in no way be confused with the political community, nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendence of the human person. Accordingly, what is in question here is man in all his truth, in his full magnitude." There would be no encyclical on political issues until *Centesimus Annus* (1991), some thirteen years into his pontificate. Without encouraging political quietism, John Paul II was determined to help the Church see anew that preaching to all nations means something more than diplomacy with various states.

In his Erasmus Lecture "Papacy and Power," George Weigel is certainly correct to say that for the papacy and the Church the "Constantinian arrangement" is defunct. It is defunct, first, in that, with few minor exceptions, national governments no longer have any formal say in internal Church affairs. In everything from papal conclaves to appointment of parish priests, the Church today is self-governing. Second, the "Constantinian arrangement" is defunct in the broader and more important sense of how the Church understands its relationship to the world. And it is here that John Paul II has most notably left his mark. The Church, of course, has a well developed social doctrine that covers many different matters, including the principles of political order. Because it is so extensive, there is a natural tendency to understand it issue by issue, as if Church social doctrine were a set of policy proposals that are independent of each other. But John Paul has made it clear that all the social doctrine is predicated on the truth about man, created and redeemed by Christ. The main question for society, as well as the Church, is *quid sit homo*, "What is man?", not *quid sit Caesar.*

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In her self-understanding of how she stands vis-à-vis temporal political authority, the Church has emerged from the webs of modern history in surprisingly good shape. Her clarity in this respect is due, in no small part, to the leadership of the popes over the past century who refused to sacrifice church unity to nationalism. I do not think, however, the same can be said about the state. Modern states came out of their post-Constantinian histories in deep and seemingly chronic doubt about the nature and purpose of political authority. In courts, parliaments, and in the forum of public opinion, there is doubt about whether the state is entitled to know, judge, and effect any answer to the question *quid sit homo*; many assume it should simply defer to individual conceptions of the good.

Let us remember that, until our lifetime, the modern state was not so humble about what it could teach. To the contrary, the state was the exemplar of national culture, the patron of industry and military science, and above all the great teacher of society, *L'état enseignant.* Massive systems of mandatory education were put in place throughout the Western polities. It was not uncommon for the state to claim a de facto if not a de jure monopoly on education. Governmental bureaucracies increasingly brought society under the guidance and control of administrative law. In creating a new kind of society-state, modern regimes did not hesitate to render judgments of truth and falsity about what they deemed good or enlightened for their own societies, and beyond that, for societies across national borders. The most famous example in modern European history was Bismarck's *Kulturkampf,* when the Prussian state interrupted the governance of the Catholic Church on the basis of the state's claim to a monopoly on political authority and on the basis of the state's interest in promoting its own culture through education. In reality, there were dozens of little kulturkampfs on the part of modern states. America, no doubt, originally took a different course than the European states, but as Hegel pointed out: "As to the politics of North America, the universal purpose of the state is not yet firmly established."

I do not intend to give here a thorough accounting of what was good or ill in modern states. My brief comments are intended to highlight the point that the perceived problem of the modern state was not that it regarded itself incompetent to render judgments about human well-being, much less that it lacked authority to legislate morality. None of our grandparents would have believed that, by virtue of their citizenship, they were immune from truth judgments on the part of government. The problem, rather, was the state's tendency to monopolize these responsibilities.

Catholic social doctrine responded accordingly. By my count, between 1878 and 1939 there were some 105 encyclicals on political and social issues, as well as several dozen concordats with Western states and their former colonies. Repeatedly, the papal Magisterium insisted a) that the state has no monopoly on social authority, and b) that the state is not the sole exemplar, guardian, or teacher of truth.

In 1945, after two world wars, the sovereign nation state, the crown jewel of modernity, was brought before the bar of moral judgment. Proximately, this was a judgment upon fascism and communism, but it was also a rejection of the monistic society-state created in modern times. In any case, after 1945 it seemed perfectly reasonable to insist that government must surrender any claim to a privileged position regarding questions about the moral order. So far, so good. But there is reason to think that the lesson was so well learned that political authority came to lose a clear sense of purpose.

Far from presenting itself as the font of political authority and the pedagogue of society, the state today claims to be axiologically blind and deferential to individual conceptions of the good. It may not approve of the consequences of abortion, euthanasia, reproductive technology, and homosexual marriage, but it feels helpless to use political authority to prohibit—even to publicly discuss—the justice or injustice of these acts. First in the United States in the late 1940s, then in Canada after the adoption of the Charter of Rights in 1982, and increasingly today in the European Union, courts are expected to make value judgments untainted by political deliberation and judgment. Courts find themselves able to do little more than reiterate—to borrow an expression from the French philosopher Pierre Manent—the tautology that "man is he who has rights."

In *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), the Pope calls attention to a new and deeply troubling historical moment for the polities of the West. He writes, "A long historical process is reaching a turning-point. The process which once led to discovering the idea of 'human rights' . . . is today marked by a surprising contradiction." While governments are pledged by the principles of their constitutions to uphold human rights, they are tempted also to think that "it is not the task of the law to choose between different moral opinions, and still less can the law claim to impose one particular opinion to the detriment of others."

Undoubtedly, the causes of this situation are complicated. At least in part it was caused by a sound instinct, expressed as a disillusionment with the overweening power of the modern state and its threat to individual freedom. But in attempting to correct that problem, contemporary societies have engaged in a wholesale shift of sovereignty from the state to the individual. Hence we see not merely the privatization of industry and of what were once deemed public services (which,

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on a case by case basis, may be quite desirable from an economic standpoint), but a privatization of judgments that not so long ago indisputably belonged to public authority: judgments about uses of lethal force and who deserves to live or die, judgments about how the strong treat the weak, and judgments about whether private parties can claim power over something as common as the genetic infrastructure of the *humanum*.

Having labored for more than a century to teach governments the dangers of a hyper-sovereignty and the soundness of the principle of subsidiarity, the Church today finds itself having to urge states to address the most elementary issues of government. The former teaching moment of the Church had to deal with an excess of state power, whereas today it must deal with the new myth that human well-being can be secured without or despite political authority. The cluster of economic and social changes discussed under the rubric of "globalization" undoubtedly will make the situation even more fluid and puzzling. It is an open-ended question whether current talk about "devolution" augurs a recovery of political authority at the local and regional levels, or whether it betokens the next stage of disillusionment with the tasks of government.

If *Evangelium Vitae* is any indication of the relationship, apropos of George Weigel's phrase, between "the papacy and power," the Magisterium will have to be prepared for a rather frustrating relationship. Governments today seem unable, or in any case unwilling, to recognize much less effectuate even the minimal rights which the Church understands to flow from the nature of human dignity. On the other hand, by teaching a proper distance between the Christian kerygma and the instruments of politics, Pope John Paul II has repositioned Catholic social doctrine to grapple with the underlying issue, the truth about man.

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Midge Decter

It seems—nay not seems, *is*—presumptuous for me, a Jew, to be entering into a discussion of the future of the Church.

The Church is after all an institution that has seen to its own survival for century after century under a great variety of political, economic, and geographical conditions, sometimes admirably, sometimes perhaps not so admirably, without benefit of counsel from the likes of me. But two circumstances have emboldened me to add my thoughts to this discussion. One, of course, is that FIRST THINGS asked me. But this by itself might still not be enough were it not for another, and far more significant, consideration, namely, the very particular way in which the papacy of John Paul II has engaged the world beyond the Church, and me with it.

In his essay, George Weigel spoke of one of his friends, a Jew who regards himself as a committed secularist and who remarked that very much to his own surprise, he cares intensely about the question of who is to succeed John Paul II. Now, if my suspicion about the identity of this person is correct, I will permit myself to doubt his self-description, but that is neither here nor there. As it happens, though a far from sinless Jew, I would never call myself a secularist; still, I feel exactly as Weigel's friend does. While I marvel at John Paul II's physical courage and tenacity, I worry at every unignorable new sign that the Pope is in frail health. This says nothing special about Weigel's Jewish friend and me but everything about the current papacy.

For this pope has made the Church—as some of his predecessors certainly did not—a great propulsive force in what has been a frequently very lonely, and for some a truly bitter, battle to increase the world's sum of freedom. I know that John Paul II takes a dimmer view of American society than would totally gladden my heart; and I must confess that I have felt a certain cold wind at my back as I listened to him caution people in Latin America who do not even yet own shoes against falling into the trap of materialism. But these things pale beside the spectacle of that great journey to Poland, in which he gave the Poles, and through them many millions of the rest of us, an infusion of hope that we would see the end of a dark and shameful chapter in a shameful, shameful century.

Then there was the further and in a way even more amazing spectacle of all those vast and spiritually hungry crowds all over the world, especially the kids among them, from France to the Philippines to Denver, Colorado, screaming for him their yearning to be lifted up. Who even knew—or what is more to the point, who even cared—whether they were Catholic or not? The point was that they were looking to be fed something for which their societies had clearly left them wanting. How could anyone, even a Jew like me, even seeing all this through the reductiveness of the television screen, fail to feel the extraordinary healing presence of this man wherever he turned up?

And when he stood silent in Yad Vashem—whose plain and stark memorialization of the horrors that befell the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazis positively begs for silence—he left a drop of the kind of healing balm on the hearts of Jews that the Church had never before found the means (assuming the desire) to

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do. He wishes to internationalize the holy places in Jerusalem, which leaves me shaking my head in dismay (such an intervention would lead to a chaos of injustice and violence that would make the present Intifada war against the Jews seem like a picnic and would have dire consequences for the holy places themselves—so far still untouched). But worldly politics aside, his appearance in the still-golden city of Jerusalem was a truly golden moment in the annals of my sore beset people.

All this I feel is what somehow gives me a stake in what happens to the Church and to the papacy after John Paul II, though I cannot by right enter further into the discussion of that future. What I can do, however, is invoke upon the head of this present Pope an old Jewish folk blessing: may he live to be one-hundred-and-twenty.

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Avery Dulles

As the history of the twentieth century strikingly attests, each pope responds to the contingent situations of his day and puts the stamp of his own personality on the office. But a discussion of the future of the papacy must attend also to its underlying continuity. Since Leo XIII, who was forced to accede to the loss of the Papal States, the papacy has steadily risen as a moral and spiritual force in the world as a whole. This development can easily be traced from the end of World War I through the pontificates of Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI. John Paul I, in taking his papal name, intended to show his solidarity with his two nearest predecessors. In calling himself John Paul II, the present pontiff expresses a similar intention. His pontificate, I shall here contend, is particularly modeled on that of Paul VI.

As the first pope after the end of Vatican II, Paul VI had a delicate task—that of faithfully implementing the Council in the face of resistance from obdurate conservatives and radical progressives. While seeking to keep the reactionary Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre from falling into schism, he authorized liturgical reforms in the spirit of Vatican II, including greater use of the vernacular. Although not averse to diplomatic compromises, he at times made decisions displeasing to each wing. In retrospect he stands out as a faithful interpreter of the Council.

In internal church matters Paul VI did away with the flamboyant royalism of papal zouaves and noble guards. He reformed the curia, internationalized its membership, and abolished the Index of Forbidden Books. Conscious of his responsibilities to the Church throughout the world, he made extensive use of the episcopal conferences mandated by Vatican II and of the Synod of Bishops which he himself had established during the Council.

In doctrinal matters Paul VI tended to be conservative, as the papal office would seem to require. His "Credo of the People of God" reaffirmed traditional beliefs that were being called into question in some theological circles. In his encyclical on the Eucharist he firmly reasserted the Real Presence and the veneration due to the Blessed Sacrament. In line with the tradition, he defended clerical celibacy, ruled out contraception, and firmly opposed the ordination of women. He recognized that the Church must be in some respects a "sign of contradiction"—a term echoed in the writings of John Paul II.

Like John XXIII before him, Paul VI was a champion of religious freedom. Strongly approving of Vatican II's Declaration on that subject (*Dignitatis Humanae*), he addressed the world's political leaders at the end of the Council with the words: "What does the Church ask of you today? In one of the major texts of the Council she has told you: she asks of you nothing but freedom—the freedom to believe and to preach her faith, the freedom to love God and serve Him, the freedom to live and to bring to men her message of life. Do not fear her."

In continuity with John XXIII, Paul VI worked to disengage the Church from involvements in Italian politics and to enter into direct relations with world leaders of different ideologies. He received leaders such as Gromyko, Tito, Ceausescu, and Golda Meir in audiences. He wanted to go to Poland to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of the establishment of the Polish hierarchy in 1966, but the Polish government denied him a visa. (John Paul II, in his triumphant visits to Poland, achieved more than Paul VI could possibly have hoped to.)

George Weigel criticizes Paul VI for his *Ostpolitik*, but it was that policy, after all, that permitted Wojtyla to be named Archbishop of Krakow. By the time John Paul II was elected pope, a more confident policy could be adopted toward the Soviet Union and its European satellites. But something like an *Ostpolitik* is still being rightly pursued with respect to China.

In his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967), Paul VI proclaimed a "new humanism" prophetic of John Paul II's. "By reason of his union with Christ, the source of life," he wrote, "man attains to new fulfillment of himself, to a transcendent humanism which gives him his greatest possible perfection." Quoting Henri de Lubac, he insisted that efforts to organize the world without God can only result in frustration and dehumanization.

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In accord with his integral humanism, Paul VI made himself a patron of the arts. He had broad literary interests, read voraciously in several languages, loved classical music, and assembled the splendid collection of modern painting and sculpture that can still be viewed in the Paul VI Museum in Brescia. At the close of Vatican II he wrote a stirring "Message to Artists," reminding them that they are "the guardians of beauty in the world." In this respect he anticipated John Paul II's much appreciated "Letter to Artists."

In his first encyclical, issued while the Council was still finding its way, Paul VI called for a Church in dialogue with other churches, with other religions, and with secular humanists, but called attention to the virtual impossibility of dialogue with atheistic communism. He made extraordinary progress in ecumenism, forming cordial friendships with Archbishop Arthur Michael Ramsey of Canterbury and Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople. In his pioneering visit to the Holy Land, he exchanged the kiss of peace with Athenagoras on the Mount of Olives and in the following year joined with him in consigning the anathemas of the year 1054 to oblivion. He was also the first pope to address the World Council of Churches in its headquarters at Geneva, a gesture that John Paul II has repeated.

As an apostle of peace, Paul VI traveled to New York in 1965 to address the General Assembly of the United Nations, reminding it of its mission of reconciliation and justice toward all. Establishing a precedent for John Paul II at Puebla, Paul VI journeyed to Medellín in 1968 to address the General Conference of Latin American Bishops.

Having taken the name "Paul" in memory of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul VI imitated that apostle in his travels. He might well have called himself, in the self-designation of John Paul II, "the pilgrim pope of evangelization." He chose evangelization as the topic for the Synod of Bishops in 1974, and after the assembly composed his great apostolic exhortation "On the Evangelization of the Modern World." He is the true originator of the "new evangelization," which John Paul II has so ardently promoted. At his funeral an open book of the Gospels was laid on his coffin, a fitting reminder of the spirit of his pontificate.

In the Epilogue of his monumental biography of John Paul II, George Weigel lists eight areas in which that pope has made significant impact. Prominent on the list are fidelity to Vatican II, religious freedom, the priority of culture, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and worldwide evangelization. In areas such as these John Paul II has built on the achievements of Paul VI, who likewise followed his recent predecessors. The continuities between these papacies, while they do not erase the differences, are at least equally important. That past must inform our thinking about the future of the papacy as well.

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Robert W. Jenson

George Weigel's lecture, and his responses during the discussions that followed, held up as key two observations: that the papal mission is fundamentally defined as "strengthening the brethren," as a pastoral mission to believers; and that in the pope's addresses to the world and its polities he persuades, and does not—at least any longer—use secular polities' own modes of power. In response to a question from the floor, Weigel agreed that in the pope's jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church itself, he of course cannot be limited to persuasion, but must sometimes act in more dispositive fashion.

This prompts two questions. Both are important particularly for the ecumenical situation and discussion.

The first: If the pope's mission within the Church is fundamentally pastoral—a "strengthening" of the faithful, and particularly of fellow pastors—must not his jurisdiction here too have suasion at its heart? Must there not be a kind of jurisdiction, *jurisdicere*, "laying down the law," that is peculiar to the Church, even though the Church is not the Kingdom itself? And then must there not be structures of law and administration appropriate to the Church, that stand in no very binding analogy to those of the world's powers? It will perhaps be granted that the churches, including the Roman Catholic, have not yet been fully granted such structures and will in this age always still be seeking them. But might not Rome, with the far greater scope and sheer gravitas of its polity, lead in the search?

The second: What of the pope's present relation to communities that are outside the Roman Catholic Church yet are acknowledged to be not simply part of the world? If there exists between the Church of Rome and, say, the churches of the magisterial Reformation an "imperfect communion," and if indeed the Bishop of Rome has primacy in all churches in communion with the Roman Church, must not the pope now actually have correspondingly "imperfect" primacy in the Reformation churches, and should he not for his part guide his relation to them by that understanding? That is, should he not behave toward them in some fashion as their pastor?

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For the rest of my space, let me attach a few remarks to these questions, moving from the first toward the second.

"Jurisdiction" is of course a legal term, and there is no occasion to be abashed by that. But how should a pastor "lay down the law" in his church? And if one pastor's church is the universal Church, so that it encompasses local and regional churches with their pastors, how should he lay down law for or to these other pastors? I will enter the intra-Catholic broils around such proposals as Archbishop John Quinn's only so far as to agree with another statement by Weigel, that "democracy," in the common understanding of the term, is not a useful idea in ecclesial context, and that proposals to devolve authority should be carefully examined lest they in fact increase bureaucracy. Granting this does not mean, however, that churchly legal systems that function generally in close analogy to worldly structures of polity, even if indeed lacking police and means of physical coercion, are appropriate.

What would a *jurisdicere* with suasion at its heart be like? The present pope's great labor of teaching surely shows the way in matters of faith and morals. A good pastor lays down law about Christian truth chiefly by expounding the marvels that are there to be thought and practiced; rather than by describing what is not permitted, he disciplines first by displaying truth.

This of course does not mean there are no limits; the argument that if the center is cultivated the boundaries need not be watched is daily refuted by experience. But a pastor must resist the temptation to build fences around the fences of dogma and moral prohibition, thereby constructing middle realms in which arbitrary decision will be a temptation and will in any case be perceived. When the pastor in question is the pope, this perception will always be close at hand, justly or not. And it will of course be especially strong in separated communities.

It may be illuminating to consider a question about which there has recently been some controversy: How should a church university or college be different because it is a church university or college? The heart of the matter must surely be demonstration of the intellectual advantage that, say, a Christological metaphysics provides for understanding the history and fate of the cosmos, or that St. Augustine's analyses provide for grasping what ails our politics. There are of course prohibitions. A churchly school should not teach religion as if all religions were equally true or false, or appoint a critical mass of its faculty from secularists, and undoubtedly in certain situations a functioning magisterium will say so with force, but such mandates are nevertheless mere preliminaries.

The present pope's teaching ministry has willy-nilly made him in fact a pastor among Protestants also. It would be a great blessing if future popes continued and expanded the work. We have been moving toward the second question.

The present pope has shown much brother-feeling with "ecclesial communities" on the other side of the Western schism, and daring in liturgical sharing with them. The great journeys among his fellow Catholics have profoundly gripped Protestants also, as their own supposedly great occasions no longer do. But he has not found a consistent way of *addressing* separated "brothers and sisters in Christ." Are they to be addressed in the same general way as other "persons of good will"? Or as Muslims are? From another side: In pronouncements directed to dissenting Catholics, should intentional care be taken to avoid sideswiping innocently onlooking Protestants?

A silent plea may even be coming from the separated communities: preach to us and teach us, directly and by name. In matters of faith, address us as not among the theists or seekers, but with the suasions of dogma and theological insight. In matters of morals, marshal the arguments you would use for Catholics, the arguments of Scripture and tradition. Address, just to begin with, our horrid confusions about abortion with the blunt judgments of the fathers.

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David B. Hart

As John Paul II's extraordinary pontificate enters its twilight (pray God, a long and golden one), it is well to reflect upon his enormous achievements and celebrate them with the grateful astonishment they merit. But it is also sobering to recall that the one aim that, by his own avowal, has always lain closest to his heart—reconciliation between the Eastern and Roman Churches—has proven to be the source of his gravest disappointment, and probably the only manifest failure that can be placed in the balance over against his innumerable successes. As an Orthodox Christian definitely in the ecumenical "left wing" of my church, I cannot speak for all my co-confessionalists; but I can record my own shame that so few Orthodox hierarchs have even recognized the remarkable gesture made by John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), in openly soliciting advice on how to understand his office (even indeed the limits of its jurisdiction), or been moved to respond with anything like comparable Christian charity. However, the Pope has perhaps always been somewhat quixotic in

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his reckoning of the severity of the differences between the communions, and so of the effort required to effect any real reciprocal understanding between them (let alone rapprochement).

Anyone familiar with the Eastern Christian world knows that the Orthodox view of the Catholic Church is often a curious mélange of fact, fantasy, cultural prejudice, sublime theological misunderstanding, resentment, reasonable disagreement, and unreasonable dread: it sees a misty phantasmagoria of crusades, predestination, "modalism," a God of wrath, flagellants, Grand Inquisitors, and those blasted Borgias. But, still, and from my own perspective *ab oriente*, I must remark that the greater miscalculation of what divides us is almost inevitably found on the Catholic side, not always entirely free of a certain unreflective condescension. Often Western Christians, justifiably offended by the hostility with which their advances are met by certain Orthodox, assume that the greatest obstacle to reunion is Eastern immaturity and divisiveness. The problem is dismissed as one of "psychology," and the only counsel offered one of "patience." Fair enough: decades of Communist tyranny set atop centuries of other, far more invincible tyrannies have effectively shattered the Orthodox world into a contentious confederacy of national churches struggling to preserve their own regional identities against every "alien" influence, and under such conditions only the most obdurate stock survives. But psychology is the least of our problems.

In truth, so vehement is this pope's love of Eastern Christianity that it has often blinded him to the most inexorable barriers between the churches. As an error of judgment, this is an endearing one, but also one possible only from the Western vantage. Of course a Catholic who looks eastward finds nothing to which he objects, because what he sees is the Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils (but—here's the rub—for him, this means the *first* seven of twenty-one). When an Orthodox turns his eyes westward he sees what appears to him a Church distorted by innovation and error: the filioque clause, the pope's absolute primatial authority, purgatory, indulgences, priestly celibacy. Our deepest divisions concern theology and doctrine, and this problem admits of no immediately obvious remedy, because both churches are so fearfully burdened by infallibility. The disagreements in theology can be mitigated: Western theologians now freely grant that the Eastern view of original sin is more biblical than certain Latin treatments of the matter; only the most obtusely truculent Orthodox still believe that the huge differences in Trinitarian theology that a previous generation found everywhere in Latin tradition indeed actually exist; etc. But doctrine is more intractable. The Catholic Church might plausibly contemplate the suppression of the filioque, but could it repudiate the claim that the papacy ever possessed the authority to allow such an addition? The Eastern Church believes in sanctification after death, and perhaps the doctrine of purgatory really asserts nothing more; but can Rome ever say that in speaking of it as "temporal punishment," which the pope may in whole or part remit, it was in error? And so on.

Even if we retreat to the issue of psychology again, here too Catholic ecumenists often misconstrue the nature of the Orthodox distrust of their good will. It is not simply the case that the Orthodox are so fissiparous and jealous of their autonomy that the Petrine office appears to them a dangerous principle of homogeneity, an *ordo obedientiae* to which their fractious Eastern wills cannot submit. Jurisdictional squabbling aside, the Orthodox world enjoys so profound a unity—of faith, worship, spirituality, and ecclesiology—that the papacy cannot but appear to it as a dangerous principle of plurality. After all, under the capacious canopy of the papal office, so many disparate things find common shelter. Eastern rites huddle alongside liturgical practices (hardly a peripheral issue in the East) disfigured by rebarbative banality, by hymnody both insipid and heterodox, and by a style of worship that looks flippant if not blasphemous. Academic theologians explicitly reject principles of Catholic orthodoxy, but are not (as they would be in the East) excluded from communion. There are three men called Patriarch of Antioch in the Roman communion—Melkite, Maronite, and Latin (I think I have them all)—which suggests that the very title of patriarch, even as regards an apostolic see, is merely honorific, because the only unique patriarchal office is the pope's. As unfair as it may seem, to Orthodox Christians it often appears as if, from the Catholic side, so long as the pope's supremacy is acknowledged, all else is irrelevant ornament. Which yields the sad irony that the more the Catholic Church strives to accommodate Orthodox concerns, the more disposed many Orthodox are to see in this merely the advance embassy of an omnivorous ecclesial empire.

All of which sounds rather grim. But having made the necessary qualifications, I can now praise John Paul II for all he has done for the unity of the apostolic Churches. He is, simply stated, a visionary on this matter. True, human beings cannot overcome the obstacles dividing East from West; but the unity of the Church is never—even when it is only two or three gathered in Christ's name—a human work. Each church is grievously wounded by its separation from the other, and only those who have allowed pride and infantile anger to displace love in their hearts are blind to this.

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Moreover, our need for one another grows greater with the years. It is sometimes suggested that the future of society in the West—and so, perhaps, the world—is open to three "options": Christianity, Islam, and a consumerism so devoid of transcendent values as to be, inevitably, nothing but a pervasive and pitiless nihilism. The last of these has the singular power of absorbing some of the energies of the other two without at first obviously draining them of their essences; the second enjoys a dogmatic warrant for militancy and a cultural cohesiveness born both of the clarity of its creed and the refining adversities of political and economic misfortune; but the only tools at Christianity's disposal will be evangelism and unity. The confrontation between the Church and modern consumerism will continue to occur principally in the West, where a fresh infusion of Orthodoxy's otherworldliness may prove a useful inoculant; but the encounter or confrontation with Islam will be principally, as it long has been, in the East. It is impossible to say what peace will be wrought there or what calamity, but it may well be that the Petrine office, with its unique capacity for "strengthening the brethren" and speaking the truth to the world, will prove indispensable.

The present pope has long been the great, indefatigable voice of Christian conviction in a faithless age. If future popes follow his lead, and speak out forcibly on behalf of the Christians—in Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and elsewhere—who will most acutely suffer the pressure of this difficult future, love will ever more drive out suspicion, and the vision of unity that inspires John Paul II will bear fruit. *Sic*, at any rate, *oremus*.

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Paul J. Griffiths

To be the pope is to be the most powerful man in the world. It is also to be the slave of God's slaves (to exaggerate only slightly the meaning of *servus* in the traditional description of the pope as *servus servorum Dei*). The future of the papacy, like most of its past, will be found in a particular resolution of this peculiar tension.

Perhaps it sounds exaggerated to say that the one who sits in Peter's chair is the most powerful man in the world. Twentieth-century popes, after all, have been notably lacking in the two main instruments of power as ordinarily understood: armies and money. As to the former, popes have had none for more than a century; and as to the latter, while the financial resources of the Catholic Church as a whole are very large, the pope has direct command of very little of them, and even the entire budget of Vatican City is scarcely more than a mote in Bill Gates' eye. Whence then the power?

Papal power lies in the judicious use of weakness. It grows not from the barrel of a gun but from the renunciation of coercion and its replacement with witness. That is how the papacy started: with a Galilean fisherman martyred by the imperial power of Rome. And as the 264th papacy approaches its end, it is to this that the papacy points again. The idea that real power can only be had by renouncing its counterfeits is fundamental to Christian thinking. It is a central part of the story of Jesus' temptations, and it is enshrined forever in the figure of Christ on the cross. In its ideal form (which is never its actual form) the papacy serves as a sacramental sign of this truth and, thus, as a sacrament of the power of weakness.

But this does not explain why the pope is the most powerful man in the world. There are, after all, many other powers, the two principal ones being nation-states and corporations. Neither understands power as the judicious use of weakness. Each, though in significantly different ways, pursues power as domination, and so seeks above all else the victory of violence, the ideal victory in which its competitors are simply extinguished, removed from the stage. The pope is the only actor on the world stage whose understanding of power is (ideally) self-emptyingly pacific. This, so Christians (and perhaps some others) believe, is the proper understanding of power. This, then, is why the pope is the most powerful man in the world: the understanding that he represents will endure, while the others inevitably curve in upon themselves and expire of their own contradictions.

Here, though, there is a throng of paradoxes. The pope is an actor on the political stage. He has, at various times, commanded armies, ruled territory, and humbled (and been humbled by) secular potentates. Even today he is head of a tiny state that has, like other states, a foreign policy with diplomats and emissaries, and is thereby subject to the compromises, evasions, and half-truths that properly belong to diplomacy. Paul VI's nuncios spent fifteen years on an *Ostpolitik* of subterfuge and compromise in their engagements with the Soviet Empire. Perhaps John Paul II's are now doing the same in their negotiations with the Chinese. Was (and is) all this a mistake? Should the pope speak always and only as a witness expecting martyrdom? Should he renounce the instruments of diplomacy?

I think not. The world (even the political world) is the theater of God's glory, and it is a theater in which the pope and the church of which he is pastor are actors. The pope's power-in-weakness can and must be exercised for particular political ends, while at the same time realizing that these ends may not be attained or attain-

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able short of the coming of the kingdom. Diplomacy (like politeness) is ruled out only by a thoroughgoing contempt for its objects and goals, and such contempt is impossible for Christians. Those who have contempt for the political world will ignore it by turning their backs on it, or they will treat it as a field in which the *libido dominandi* has unrestricted play. The first option is sectarian; the second Hobbesian. Previous popes have been subject to the latter error more often than the former, but neither, finally, is a defensible possibility for Christians, and neither is represented by the present pope.

If such contempt is ruled out, what then of the future uses of papal power? How should the political agency of the papacy best be enacted? George Weigel's Erasmus Lecture is suggestive here. According to that analysis, it has been characteristic of John Paul II's diplomacy that his dramatic acts of public witness to the importance of freedom—in Poland, before the United Nations, in Cuba, and so on—have stood in tension with the continuing, more traditional, diplomacy of the Vatican, even to the point of contradiction. Under-the-table negotiations with Jaruzelski in Poland, Honecker in East Germany, and other Communist potentates continued during this papacy much as they had under Paul VI. Such negotiations assume a lack of open public criticism of one another on the part of the principals. But this is just what John Paul II provided: his public speeches confronted the ideology of those with whom diplomatic negotiations were simultaneously under way, and as a result countered the acts of his diplomats even without halting them.

This is just how things should proceed. This is how a Christian potentate exhibits his lack of contempt for the political. He does not withdraw from it by ending diplomatic engagements: that would be sectarianism. But neither does he place unrestricted confidence in their efficacy: that would be Hobbesianism. No. He acts politically, but at the same time throws the politics of his acts into question. This is the judicious use of weakness in which the power of the papacy actually consists. My hope for the future of the papacy (and of the world) is that present and future popes continue to act politically in just this way. It is quite certain that they are the only ones who will.

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Icons and Kitsch

Edward T. Oakes

The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm. By Alain Besançon. Translated by Jean Marie Todd. *University of Chicago Press. 408 pp. $40.*

One of the oddest features of contemporary English—indeed of modern languages across the board—is the habit speakers so often indulge of using terms drawn from one of the arts to praise the other arts, or life itself. To rhapsodize a "poetic" view of the Dolomite mountains, for example, from one's hotel window, or to eulogize a patient's "epic" struggle with cancer, or to call Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata "lyric" is to speak in obviously laudatory terms. But this crossover benefit, in which the arts seem to have formed their own Mutual Admiration Society, does not apply to what perhaps should be called the illegitimate daughter in the family of the Muses: the art of the theater. As Jonas Barish points out in his sharply observed monograph *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* (1981), terms such as *theatrical*, *operatic*, *melodramatic*, and *stagey* tend to be hostile or belittling, as do phrases like *play-acting*, *putting on an act*, *making a scene*, *making a spectacle of oneself*, *playing to the gallery*, and so forth.

Why is it that terms like *musical*, *symphonic*, *graphic*, and *sculptural* are nearly always eulogistic? Conversely, why would one never want one's personality described as "histrionic"? Why does usage seem to imply that Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy, has been fated to act out the sad part of the Cinderella-like stepsister, while her elder sisters get all the glory? As Barish points out in an amusing aside, "In an old movie comedy, an affected matron expressed her appreciation of dinner by declaring that 'the fish was simply a *poem*'—obviously the most rapturous word of approval she could think of." But one would never want one's behavior at a gravesite described as "chewing the scenery," no matter how justified one's grief.

This oddity of language reflects a deeply felt prejudice against the theatrical arts that can be traced all the way back to the pre-Socratics—in other words, to the very point when theater began in the West. Solon, for example, the ruler of Athens when that city built its first amphitheater, called Thespis, the first playwright of Greece, a "liar." In an age like ours, when a Hollywood movie actor who was also head of the actors' union for a while became President of the United States, this prejudice might seem mere crankery. But as Barish explains, "If it is an aberration, [prejudice against the theater] is one to which virtually our whole species seems in some measure prone. . . . It would seem to reflect something permanent about the way we think of ourselves and our lives."

As it happens, the same hostility can actually be ascribed to all the plastic arts, as Alain Besançon demonstrates in his remarkable history of iconoclasm, a history he traces from Moses and the pre-Socratic philosophers down to the Soviet commissars of art. True enough, terms now drawn from the plastic (and musical) arts tend to be eulogistic. But this usage merely reflects the still vital influence of Romanticism on our attitudes, a nineteenth-century shift in sensibilities that tended to elevate the arts to a quasi-divine, almost Delphic status. But the hushed tones in which the word "art" is still so often invoked, however undeservedly—or even such matronly silliness as calling an entrée a "poem"—should not obscure from us how deeply ambivalent we remain about images and icons, and thus about all the mimetic arts.

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Nor does our ambivalence limit itself merely to religious art, as the term "iconoclasm" seems to imply. Although our culture is now positively awash in images, this assaulting pictorial cataract from glossy magazines, slide shows, PowerPoint college lectures, air-brushed publicity photos, TV simulacra, and copyright rip-offs actually reflects a hatred for the true image, as Jacques Barzun noted in *The Use and Abuse of Art* (1975):

> Nowadays anything put up for seeing or hearing is only meant to be taken in casually. If it holds your eye and focuses your wits for even a minute, it justifies itself and there's an end of it. . . . The Interesting has replaced the Beautiful, the Profound, and the Moving. [But] if modern man's most sophisticated relation to art is to be casual and humorous, is to resemble the attitude of the vacationer at the fair grounds, then the conception of Art as an all-important institution, as a supreme activity of man, is quite destroyed. One cannot have it both ways—art as a sense-tickler and a joke is not the same art that geniuses and critics have asked us to cherish and support. Nor is it the same art that revolutionists call for in aid of the Revolution.

Barzun's title deliberately alludes to Friedrich Nietzsche's essay "The Use and Abuse of History," and for good reason. For perhaps more than any other philosopher of modernity Nietzsche espouses the fiercest version of iconoclasm, an attack on the image that, for sheer ferocity, has its only philosophical counterpart in Plato. Now, no one has proved easier to gang up on than Plato when discussion moves to his intensely anti-poetical, anti-image aesthetics. But Nietzsche easily outdoes him here, especially in his polemical essay *Human, All Too Human*, where he roundly declares all art false to the core:

> *The Beyond in art.*—With profound sorrow one admits to oneself that, in their highest flights, the artists of all ages have raised to heavenly transfiguration precisely those conceptions which we now recognize as false: artists are the glorifiers of the religious and philosophic errors of mankind, and they could not have been so without believing in the absolute truth of these errors. If belief in such truth declines in general, then that species of art can never flourish again which—like the *Divine Comedy*, the paintings of Raphael, the frescoes of Michelangelo, the Gothic cathedrals—presupposes not only a cosmic but a metaphysical significance in the objects of art. A moving tale will one day be told how there once existed such an art, such an artist's faith.

In effect, Alain Besançon, the director of studies at L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, has decided in *The Forbidden Image* to take upon himself the task of being the one who will tell us this "moving tale." Almost as if in verification of Nietzsche's point, Besançon mentions in the Introduction how his exposure to contemporary art led him to write his book. It was during his visit to the Paris Biennial a few years back that he came to see how reliant contemporary artists have become on what museum marketing staffs like to call "the Shock of the New." Like the Venice Biennale, or the Whitney Museum's biannual display of contemporary art in New York, or the Brooklyn Museum's notorious show *Sensation*, the Paris version displayed works whose only purpose was to offend the very society whose support the artist was seeking. The results apparently were quite harrowing for Besançon, and he describes the Paris exhibition in vivid and telling detail: "I walked through rooms capriciously strewn with debris, little piles of sand, roaring machines. On the walls were charred objects, the macabre remains of some death camp, obstetrical objects to turn your stomach, a neon tube in a corner."

Now, no sensible person would deny the deplorability of what often passes for art in the elite galleries and museums of Europe and America. But a student of the history of that school of anti-art known as iconoclasm knows he must seek other game than the easy prey of nihilist art. For in a very real sense, the hatred for art that now assumes the guise of so-called avant-garde art is rooted in that same iconoclastic polemic that animates every syllable of Plato and Nietzsche, not to mention a host of other art *critics* (in the literal sense of that word) from Origen, St. Augustine, and Blaise Pascal to those Russian commissars of art who ruled on matters of taste by *diktat* and *ukase*.

The story of the peculiarly Western ambivalence toward the image, especially the image born in the artist's studio, begins, as with so much in Western civilization, with the confluence of the Hebrew and Hellenic cultures, although as Besançon points out, it would be far too simplistic to call the Hebrew side "iconoclastic" and the Hellenic "iconodulic" (meaning a reverential attitude toward the icon). For at least some of the pre-Socratics, during roughly the same time as the major prophets of the Hebrew Bible, were famous, or notorious, for their contempt for polytheistic assumptions that the gods could be depicted by the plastic arts. Xenophanes (approximately 570-500 B.C.) has earned for himself a perpetual place in undergraduate philosophy textbooks with his famous line that "if horses or oxen or lions had hands they could draw with and thus could accomplish such works as men, horses

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would draw the figures of the gods as similar to horses, and oxen as similar to oxen, and they would make the bodies of the sort which each of them had." And so with the races of men: "Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black; Thracians that theirs are blue-eyed and red-haired."

Moreover, as Besançon notes, the Ten Commandments did not entail as strictly an image-less culture as is sometimes assumed. "Two contradictory themes, point and counterpoint, are developed in the Old Testament," he says: "The absolute prohibition of images and the assertion that images of God exist." In this insight he shrewdly notices a subtle difference between what seems like a similar ban on images in Judaism and Islam: "Even though they both agree that images should be banished, it seems to me that the reasons for that banishment are not the same in Judaism and Islam. For Islam, it is God's insurmountable distance that renders impossible the fabrication of an image worthy of its object; for Judaism, it is God's intimate familiarity." God relates to the Jews in the Bible in a way that is far less transcendent than the way God relates to the human race in the Qur'an:

> [In the Old Testament] it was God Himself who gave that positive commandment [to have no graven image before Him]. . . . It is not by virtue of His nature that God is unrepresentable, but by virtue of the relationship He intends to maintain with His people. It is not because of the impersonality of the divine, but, on the contrary, because of His relation as one person to another or as one person to His people. It is God's plans for His people—impenetrable plans—that justify the prohibition.

By way of sharpest contrast to the ban on depictions of God in Judaism and Islam, the Greek gods and goddesses are nearly as omnipresent to a Greek city as billboards are in today's city. Why might that be? For Besançon, the answer can only be that in Greek mythology (indeed, one might add, in mythological religions throughout the whole globe) the gods have a genealogy: in polytheism *gods are born.* The differences between monotheism and polytheism on this score are absolutely crucial. As Yehezkel Kaufmann, one of the twentieth century's great scholars of the Hebrew Bible, explained in his magisterial book *The Religion of Israel* (1960), in mythological religion "the gods are subject by their nature to sexual needs. They gestate and give birth, they die and are resurrected; some are young, others old. Moreover, they are subject to physical conditions. They eat and drink, fall sick and require healing, need and invent tools, and so forth." But Israel's God, on the contrary, "has no pedigree, fathers no generations; he neither inherits nor bequeaths his authority. He does not die and is not resurrected. He has no sexual qualities or desires and shows no need of or dependence upon powers outside of himself."

These stark differences are fundamental, and indeed mark a near total revolution in the religious ideas of mankind, so much so that they make Israel's undoubted borrowings from Egypt and Babylon seem as trivial as the Egyptian jewelry that the Hebrews brought along for their passage through the Red Sea. Moreover, these stark differences in worldview between monotheism and polytheism make well-nigh inevitable the different attitudes these two cultures took toward the art of representation. The West has inherited both attitudes, and both have influenced our view of the image. As Besançon observes, "The [Greek] god is truly a god. But he lives in the same cosmos as men, and he shares his perfection with men . . . [while] the biblical 'thou' is addressed to a God who lies beyond the cosmos."

No doubt, the depth and the sheer intensity of the ambivalence that the West has felt about art come from the confluence of the Hebrew and Hellenic elements. But as we have already seen, each culture, in isolation, had already spawned an opposite tendency even before its first contact with the other. Never was that internally generated ambivalence expressed more strongly than in Plato's iconoclasm. Besançon is eloquent and insightful in explaining the inner sources of Plato's hostility to the image:

> [For Plato] the nature of the divine makes the image of the divine impossible. Art has an upper limit: it is confined to the earthly zone, where it performs a propaedeutic, educational, civic function. It prepares for its own dissolution. The lover of beauty relies on art in taking his first steps, then abandons it. In that sense, it is accurate to say that Plato is the father of iconoclasm.

But the advent of Christianity alters the equation completely. This religion is nearly equal parts Hebrew and Hellenic, and its transformation of these two elements also guaranteed a further complexity. Christianity did not simply take over the Hebrew Bible without first radically reinterpreting it (for example, despite its strict monotheism, Christianity preaches a God-man who *does* die and is resurrected), and the same will later prove the case with Greek philosophy. Indeed, this complex mixture accounts for the frequent outbursts of iconoclasm that have punctuated Church history down through the ages in both Eastern and Western churches.

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Often this tension was felt to have been so painful that one or another heretic sought to suppress either the Hebrew or the Hellenic element, as with the efforts of the second-century Marcion to get the Church to excise the Old Testament from the Christian Bible, or, from the opposite side, the sneering rhetorical question from the puritanical pen of the early-third-century Tertullian, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" But not only is the Christian Bible inextricably composed of Hebrew and Greek books, they also jostle each other uneasily: the Hebrew books constitute a much longer text, but the Greek text is understood somehow to trump the older, and much lengthier, Testament.

On a more mundane level, we know that Jesus spoke Aramaic (the spoken dialect of biblical Hebrew), since fragments of his speech are embedded in the Greek Gospels (see Mark 5:41; 15:34), while St. Paul proclaimed that same evangel to the world in Greek, though he seems to have been equally at home in Hebrew. This same tension crops up in the Protestant Reformation, with Martin Luther's juxtaposition of Law and Gospel (reflected in his quasi-Marcionite view that the Old Testament condemns the sinner while the New Testament proclaims a message of unmerited grace), as against John Calvin's much more positive view of Old Testament Law, a code that in fact became the legal basis for his theocracy in Geneva.

Nor can one ignore the tensions between East and West in a once united Christian Church. Although both "lungs" of the Church of the Christ have experienced the tuberculosis of iconoclasm (indeed, the very term "iconoclasm" comes from the struggle of the Greek Church against the attempts of a Greek emperor to ban icons), the Greek version of iconoclasm was much influenced not only by imperial fiat but also by the surrounding sea of Muslim culture, whereas the iconoclasm of Western Puritanism was born out of Calvin's reliance on Old Testament Law. When Calvin reestablished the validity of Old Testament Law, he inevitably made the ban on images a living commandment once again, without the additional factors of Byzantine imperial politics or Islamic influence coming into play at all.

But similarities in the iconoclastic temper between East and West obtain as well. The Byzantine emperors who first issued the edict to smash and destroy the icons (Leo the Isaurian and his son Constantine V, both of whom reigned in the eighth century) do remind one of Oliver Cromwell, for both sets of rulers were military leaders with a loyal army from the provinces; such figures often have a puritanical streak and tend, moreover, to command soldiers who themselves are suspicious of the decadent mores of the cities. But clearly, the iconoclastic controversy could never have torn the Eastern churches apart for two centuries without the imperial argument having some purchase on civilian believers, and here once more Platonism enters the lists. For Besançon makes clear that without the tremendous hold that Origen's Platonism held on all the Eastern churches (despite his condemnation two centuries earlier), iconoclasm would have been robbed of its most plausible argument. St. Paul told the Colossians that Christ is "the image of the invisible God." Origen argued, as Besançon puts it, that "if Christ alone is the perfect image of God properly speaking, he is so only by virtue of his divinity. Christ is therefore the *invisible* image of the indivisible God, since God, who is incorporeal, can have only an incorporeal image."

Such an interpretation of St. Paul might seem to deny, or at least to trivialize, the Incarnation; and in fact the incorporation of Platonic categories by the Church Fathers has always rendered the Incarnation problematic. This uneasiness with Christ's true flesh becomes especially clear in a passage from Origen that Besançon quotes as the most telling expression of Origen's implicit iconoclasm:

> The Lord is called "true," [Origen writes] in *opposition* to shadow, the figure, and the image, for such is the Word in the open heavens. It is not on earth as it is in heaven, because, having become flesh, the Word now expresses itself [on earth] through the intermediary of shadows, figures, and images. The mob of so-called believers is now instructed by the *shadow* of the Word, and not by the *true* Word of God, which is in the "open heavens." [*Commentary on John 2:16*; emphasis added]

As nearly everyone knows, this line of argument was finally defeated. The use and veneration of icons was eventually vindicated in the Eastern churches so ringingly that icons have become virtually synonymous with Orthodoxy in the public mind. The victory of the "iconodules" was the victory of incarnational theology over the Platonic template that Origen had imposed on Christian thought from the third century. For that reason, the Incarnation remained the most crucial argument of the iconodules centuries after Origen during the controversy in the reign of Leo the Isaurian. As early as the year 725, the patriarch Germanus asserted that to reject icons was also to reject the Incarnation. He absolutely refused to assimilate the image of Christ, who had *delivered* men from idolatry, to idols. Thus (and Germanus is quite open about this) the prohibition of graven images delivered on Mount Horeb became invalid from the moment that God manifested

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Himself in the flesh, sensible not only to hearing but to sight. God had "imprinted" Himself in the flesh of Jesus.

This story, as I say, is a familiar one to students of art history, church history, or dogmatic history; and for the most part Besançon soberly follows the main contours of the narrative, adding to it only his prodigious learning and a pleasing narrative style. (The superb translation by Jean Marie Todd, by the way, does the text full justice.) But the book takes a rather surprising turn when Besançon discusses how icons came to be, in the author's view, fetishized by the Orthodox churches, especially by Russian nationalists—the most flagrant case being Joseph Stalin's order that icons be displayed in Moscow the day after Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941 to whip up nationalist fervor in his atheist state. (Tellingly, the strategy worked.)

Besançon first earned his reputation as a historian of Soviet politics and of Russian nationalism (toward both of which he entertains understandably dim views), and he thinks that the Russian nationalists of the nineteenth century, among their other sins, killed the genre of icon-painting when they began to praise the icon's superiority over Western art. In one fascinating passage he discusses the visit by a Russian nationalist to the Hermitage in St. Petersburg to see a Rubens painting. The man was disgusted by what he rather luridly described as Rubens' "ample quivering flesh that delights in itself, gorges itself on meat, and necessarily kills to gorge itself." Besançon replies in kind, identifying the cult of the icon with, of all things, an aversion toward the Incarnation:

> The true and most irremediable trace of the iconoclastic spirit lies in the icon's incapacity also to depict the profane world. Even though this world, as Western art has abundantly proven, also tells of divine glory, it is absent from the almost exclusively religious art of Byzantium, the Balkans, and Russia prior to Peter the Great. An art that is wholly sacred, wholly made to be worshiped, forms a desert around itself. Of course, that is the limit of the icon, the fact that it cuts off from its sight the greater part of creation. Hidden iconoclasm—combined with iconolatry when it cares to cast anathemas on Western art—conceals a contempt for the world, which all the discourses on the Incarnation cannot completely dissimulate. . . . A neo-Platonic horror of the body and nationalist religious pride are in league together, constituting a practical iconoclasm theoretically capable of casting almost all images made by men onto the pyre: all *profane* images, whose claim to express divine grace is not taken into consideration [by Orthodox writers]; all *religious* images, because they do not bear the stamp of good theology.

The author is quite serious when he calls Eastern veneration of icons "iconolatry." In what must surely count as the most polemical passage in the entire book, Besançon even makes bold to claim that iconographers have substituted their art for true religion and even believe that their art comprehends God:

> But there is a more serious reason behind that elimination of nonreligious art, or of noniconic religious art. It comes from the intimate feeling that the icon truly allows us to grasp the divine image, and that, as a result, nothing else is worth the trouble of being represented, [only] God, His glory, the transfigured world, the resurrected body, the Kingdom. After *that* complete vision, which fulfills every expectation and elicits every prayer, what is the point of falling back into the ordinary world, what reason is there to condescend to look at inferior sights? We are touching here on the hubris of the icon, which is part of the hubris of Byzantium.

To borrow Nietzsche's word, Besançon has indeed told a "moving" tale, moving because so sad. For the author, the cult of the icon has served to create a *cordon sanitaire* around the Orthodox churches, allowing them to immure themselves in a gated community of obscurantist ecclesiastical politics and attempted geographical hegemony whereby Western Christians (or Eastern churches in union with Rome) cannot exercise their religious rights (and rites) in the lands of traditional Orthodoxy, but the Orthodox bodies are allowed to evangelize at will in the lands of the Western Enlightenment.

But in a way, the tale is even sadder in the West than in the revanchist East. Art never lies. Even bad art. The ubiquity of those biannual shows that so many museums in the West now mount testifies to the truth of Nietzsche's observation that the sense of transcendence has quite disappeared from the minds and hearts of the elites in the so-called First World. Even writers and artists who have never read a word of Nietzsche are carrying out the program he dubbed the Transvaluation of All Values, and his influence can be found in every corner of the culture. The witty repartee in the plays of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw, for example, depends entirely on the pleasure audiences get from seeing traditional values turned upside down, as in Shaw's remark, "Do not do unto others as you would have them do unto you: you may not have the same tastes." This bon mot (which could just as eas-

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ily have slipped from the lips of Wilde) testifies to a now taken-for-granted inversion of values that seizes on biblical reversals like "the last shall be first" and reverses *them*. The problem is that "it takes an omniscient God to bring justice out of these overturns," as Jacques Barzun notes:

> To a godless age, the negative part of the inversion alone remains potent. The negative perpetuates itself as a habit of thought—it becomes the highest form of self-consciousness—and it destroys everything in the most direct way; not by physical means, but by corrosion at the seat of faith and action, the human mind. That is how, today, we come to find thinkers for whom dissent is a routine, sex is a rhetoric, and violence is love.

It is for that reason that I have said that art never lies. This truncated view of man now prevails almost universally throughout the artist's world. In his lectures on aesthetics at the University of Berlin, G. W. F. Hegel observed in the 1820s that "thought long ago stopped assigning to art the sensible representation of the divine." It surely can't be entirely coincidence that shortly after these lectures were published the Catholic Liturgical Movement began to experience its first stirrings in the Benedictine monastery at Maria Laach in Germany. No doubt the good monks of Maria Laach never intended such an outcome, but in effect they began a movement that inflicted on the Roman Catholic liturgy the same fetishizing attention that the Russian nationalists were contemporaneously bestowing on the icon. Roman Catholic worship had now become a *thing*, an object to be poked and studied to death. As everyone now knows, this movement eventually terminated in one more dreary episode of modernist iconoclasm. (Besançon's book ends with a treatment of Soviet art, but it could just as well have concluded with a treatment of the Liturgical Movement.) From being studied to death, the Liturgy soon came to take on the contours of T. S. Eliot's famous "patient etherized on a table," and appalled observers (and worshipers) had to witness after the Second Vatican Council the destruction of Catholic piety in the name of "renewal." Once the mandarins of liturgical renewal got done "interpreting" the documents of the Council, it was as if Leo the Isaurian had issued a new Byzantine *ukase*, ordering Montessori English for the Eucharistic Prayer and Madison Avenue Americanese for the Bible, demanding all the while that all vestiges of warmth and color be stripped from the churches.

The situation differs somewhat when attention turns to that "art" that is universally recognized (or at least should be so recognized) as kitsch. Such art seems to have begun its invasion of the churches from as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, when St. Bernadette of Soubirous expressed horror at the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes that supposedly matched her descriptions of her visions of the "Lady." Nowhere is Nietzsche's observation about the death of transcendent art more verified than in the phenomenon of religious kitsch. What strikes one about the ubiquity of such religious artifacts is how rarely the devout are offended by what they *should* regard as blatantly obvious assaults on their devotion. For some reason, retreat houses and pilgrimage shrines in the United States have turned themselves into veritable nesting holes for such cloying artifacts, a dreary reality that prompts one to wonder what would happen to the aesthetic sensibility of the Catholic faithful if the Church were ever to declare bad art a sin.

Yet even kitsch reveals. Perhaps it represents the resistance of all those hapless bourgeois *citoyens* who were so hated by the Romantic, Byronesque "misunderstood artists" of their day, holed up in their Paris ateliers and tubercular attics. As Barzun points out, *some* kind of resistance must be expected:

> If we adopt Picasso's formula of art as a weapon to fight the enemy and the enemy turns out to be the public as a whole, the first question is how long the surgery—not to say butchery—ought to last. If we need to be shaken and shattered, if we go to the artist in order to face again and again what an enthusiast of Ezra Pound called "his celestial sneer," then it is proper to inquire how the treatment is succeeding. The object presumably is to cure the beholder of his detestable complacency and materialism. (There is about this purpose a curious air of Victorian moralism, scarcely brought up to date.) Yet the cure is to offer him in visual or imaginative shape nothing but visions of deformity. He naturally identifies himself with the misshapen and the malcontented that (says Art) is the way he is. No doubt, but it ought not to cause surprise that the patient continues deformed and malcontent. Add the angry artist's will to humiliate as he teaches, and you perceive why the process has no end—or rather, it ends in a higher complacency, the complacency of the hopeless.

Barzun's insight is the only one I can think of that adequately explains why the ubiquity of kitsch in religious art today is so complacently accepted by the laity in church without it ever seeming to arouse what would otherwise be their fully justified ire. And connoisseurs, who once were the "pickers and choosers"

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in the world of art, have become overwhelmed by the glut of "art" that the latest technology makes available everywhere. As Barzun sardonically notes, "The hotel elevator dribbles Vivaldi into our unstoppable ears, just after the cab radio has interlarded gobbets of the Ninth Symphony with the driver's loud comments on the weather."

The problem stems from the fact that, as Nietzsche saw, *there is no going back.* Very few people, I imagine, in their heart of hearts would consider the "art" at the various biannual shows in Paris, Venice, or New York that trumpet "the Shock of the New" to be greater works than what, for example, Praxiteles or Phidias bequeathed to humanity. But attempts to revive Greek art in the twentieth century either seem stodgy (the federalist style of WPA New Deal architecture in the 1930s) or, frankly, Fascist (Albert Speer's designs for Hitler's postwar Berlin); and this faintly Fascist aura clings as well to deliberate riffs on that style by photographers like Bruce Weber (who does the Calvin Klein underwear ads).

This situation leaves artists in a bind: either they hearken back to long-dead eras and create art that is, at best, derivative; or they capitulate to the offensiveness that seems now to have become the one and only hallmark of originality in the art world. (Tellingly, Besançon is nearly as critical of the modern art wing of the Vatican Museum as he is of the Paris Biennial.) Of course, Barzun is right: this dilemma cannot go on forever, any more than a starving man can eat his own body to assuage his hunger. But what is the alternative as long as the falcon cannot hear the falconer?

What our civilization continues to forget is that we have souls, and when souls are not fed, they distort and warp themselves. And souls today go largely unfed. Every day they must soak up the desolation of the contemporary landscape. Given such uncertainty, and given the dreary artistic landscape that now assaults us, perhaps the last word should be given again to the death-cry of that evangel of the death of God—and of art—Friedrich Nietzsche: "*In Gethsemane*—The most grievous thing the thinker can say to the artists is: 'What? Could ye not watch with me one hour?'" FT

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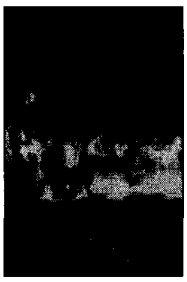

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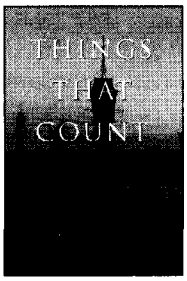

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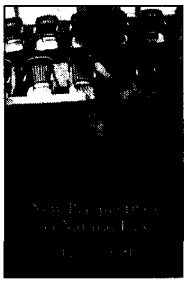

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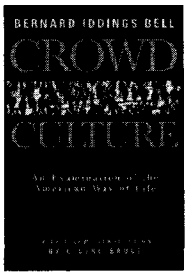

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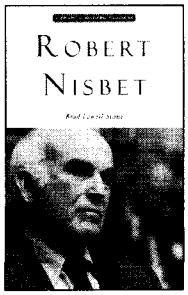

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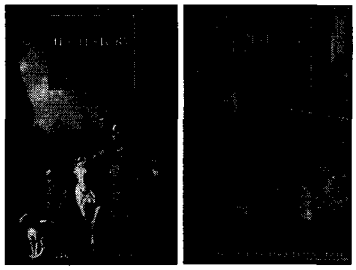

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Books In Review

To Battle Once Again

A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War. By Harry V. Jaffa. *Rowman & Littlefield. 549 pp. $35.*

Reviewed by **George McKenna**

In the preface to *Crisis of the House Divided*, his 1959 work on the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, Harry Jaffa, who had just turned forty, announced that the book was to be "the first part of a two-part study of Lincoln's political philosophy." He already had in mind the title of the new, unwritten work: *A New Birth of Freedom.*

In 2000, forty-one years later, *A New Birth of Freedom* finally appeared, and the author seems more ambitious than ever. He promises still a third volume, "on the triumph and tragedy of the war years." Jaffa offers no direct explanation about what took him so long to complete the second volume beyond noting that the gap "corresponds closely to the distance in time that separated Plato's *Republic* from his *Laws*."

The correspondence may be more exact than Jaffa intends. Plato's *Laws* is a labored work, full of interesting observations but lacking the compressed energy of the *Republic*, which Plato had written decades earlier. Something of the same comparison can be made between Jaffa's two volumes. *Crisis of the House Divided* was tightly focused. Jaffa intended the work as a definitive reply to the then-revisionist argument that in 1858 there was no substantial difference between the positions of Lincoln and Senator Stephen A. Douglas, and that therefore Lincoln's "house divided" speech unnecessarily stirred passions culminating in an unnecessary war. Systematically and efficiently, Jaffa demolished the thesis, showing how Lincoln's rhetorical strategy prevented Douglas from compromising what Lincoln called the "ancient faith" of the Founders.

The focus of the present work is less clear. In 1959 the author envisaged it as a continuation of his study of Lincoln's life and work that would culminate in a reflection on the Gettysburg Address. There is something of that here, but quite a bit more is piled on top. In the Preface he explains that "a commentary on the Gettysburg Address is a commentary on the speeches and deeds that constituted the historic process during the fourscore and seven years preceding it, no less than on the conflict of the war itself." Historically, then, the book ranges far and wide—back to the presidential election of 1800, forward to 1860, back again to the Declaration of Independence, forward to the Gettysburg Address, then back once more to the antebellum period. Along the way, Jaffa settles a number of scores with historians and philosophers he has disagreed with over the years, and even gets a shot in at Chief Justice William Rehnquist, whom he accuses of "nihilism." The Gettysburg Address, which is supposed to be the main focus of the book, has to share a chapter with the Declaration of Independence, while Lincoln's First Inaugural Address gets two chapters of its own, and the book finishes up with a long, two-part critique of John C. Calhoun.

Despite its eccentric organization, Jaffa's new book has the same solid core that his earlier book possessed. I will try to summarize it in a few words: There are certain unchanging truths about human nature and the human condition that were made the principles of the Republic in 1776 but were in danger of being compromised in Lincoln's time. By reasoned argument and by force of arms, Lincoln prevented that from occurring; indeed, he enlarged and expanded the scope of those principles. In the modern age they are once again under fire, and their abandonment today would be no less grave a threat to the Republic than the one Lincoln faced and overcame in his time.

The principles he refers to are those of the Declaration of Independence: that all men are created equal and endowed with natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Those principles were under threat in Lincoln's day because they were a stumbling block to the ambitions of the Southern slavocracy and of those Northern politicians who thought they could remain in charge of a nation "half slave and half free." The principles are endangered today, Jaffa believes, by intellectuals and jurists who reject natural law in favor of relativism, historicism, and positivism. (The last charge, after a few pages ratcheted up to "nihilism," he ascribes to Rehnquist.) Jaffa's core philosophy—his lifetime project—has been to challenge those forces in modern culture that would destroy the roots of freedom. Those who would enlist in that cause may be energized by his peroration: "We must then take up the weapons of truth and go forth to battle once again for the cause of Father Abraham, of Union, and of Freedom, as in the olden time."

The problem is the order of battle. There are so many artillery-pieces, cavalry, and infantry divisions, arrayed in so many complicated formations in this book, that a sustained thrust at the enemy never quite gets underway. It is a very substantial, rich book, but it is ponderous, McClellenesque.

To be more specific, Jaffa tries to cram together too many thinkers and philosophies on both sides of the

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divide between natural law and relativism-historicism-positivism. In the first category he includes Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Jefferson, Madison, and Lincoln; their opponents are John C. Calhoun, Alexander Stephens, Stephen Douglas, and a variety of modern jurists and historians. What is needed, I think, is a more careful sorting out of what goes with what. Take Locke, for example. Surprisingly, for such a noted student of Leo Strauss, Jaffa seems to assume that Locke fits smoothly into the natural law tradition of Western thought. But in *Natural Right and History* Strauss made a convincing case that Locke's "state of nature" represented a radical break with the tradition and brought him closer to Thomas Hobbes, author of the leviathan state. (Jaffa acknowledges the similarity between the two but says that Locke "transformed" Hobbes, and he compares Hobbes' state of nature favorably to Calhoun's on the grounds that Hobbes' was at least egalitarian.) Aristotle, whom Jaffa often uses to bolster his arguments, would be puzzled by the suggestion that man once lived without government and, as Locke put it, was "free, equal, and independent."

JEFFERSON, OF COURSE, fits well with Locke, but Jefferson had little use for the classical Greeks. He called Plato a "foggy" thinker and considered Aristotle quite out of date because he never anticipated the idea of representative government. Jefferson was self-consciously modern and "scientific" in his thought; his intellectual heroes were Locke, Newton, and Bacon. Sometimes his scientism was benign. In the last year of his life he claimed that "the light of science" was already proving that "the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs" and a favored few ready to ride them. But it also had a dark side. What most horrifies Jaffa about Alexander Stephens and John C. Calhoun is their attempt to justify slavery on the "scientific" grounds that blacks are biologically suited for nothing else. (Stephens' race-theorizing "resembles nothing so much as Hitler's prophesies of the Thousand-Year Reich.") But Jefferson also dabbled in race theories. In his *Notes on Virginia* he speculated that differences "fixed in nature" made blacks naturally ugly, deficient in reason, childish, lustful, and possessed of "a very strong and disagreeable odor." On the upside, blacks are more tolerant of heat and need less sleep than whites; plus—a big bonus—"their griefs are transient." Jefferson was more hesitant and ambivalent about his race-theorizing, but he pioneered in the same crackpot scientism, the same methodology for treating some people as less than fully human, that Jaffa rightly deplores in Calhoun and Stephens.

So, just as the connection between Jefferson, Locke, and the natural law tradition may not be as seamless as Jaffa assumes, so the opposition between Jefferson and the antebellum slavery apologists may not be as complete as he contends. And, alas, Aristotle, so often invoked in this work as a friendly source, could well end up on the other side of the fight, not only because of his own defense of slavery but because Calhoun's view that "man is so constituted as to be a social being" seems more in accord with Aristotle's definition of man as *zoon politikon* than anything Jefferson ever wrote.

If Jaffa's chosen allies seem ill-assorted and less than reliable, he seems to have largely ignored one source that Lincoln unhesitatingly turned to in a critical time: the Judeo-Christian tradition. As Lincoln expounded it, the Declaration of Independence was America's "ancient faith." He transformed its author from an Enlightenment fig-

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ure who scorned all ancient faiths into a venerable Founder whose creed should be "revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence." Jefferson, who thought that there were new truths for every generation, would have protested against all this reverence, but Lincoln knew that human equality needed to be anchored in something more stable than the ever-changing "light of science." Though not a believer himself, Lincoln used the symbols and narratives of biblical Christianity—all quite familiar to a generation raised in the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening—to drive home his message of national fraternity.

There is some acknowledgment of religion in this book, but on the whole Jaffa's Lincoln is a severely rationalist thinker, making his case, as Jaffa says of one of Lincoln's arguments, "with mathematical certainty." Another of Lincoln's arguments, he says, was so powerful that it is difficult "to imagine Euclid proving more conclusively that one geometrical figure was equal or unequal to another." Lincoln was "the greatest of all exemplars of Socratic statesmanship." "Never since Socrates has philosophy so certainly descended from the heavens into the affairs of mortal men."

Well, now. It is true that Lincoln was capable of rigorous logic. He was a tough railroad lawyer, especially skillful at hog-tying his opponents with their own premises; and his speeches are models of clarity and precision. But the Lincoln who guided the nation through its worst trial and left us a legacy of responsible nationalism was more than a Socratic reasoner. Especially in his later career, he demonstrated his profound sympathy with Americans who sensed that the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are not, as Jefferson said, "self-evident," but are deeply rooted in our religious beliefs. The language that he learned to speak with them was not Euclidean but something quite different. Something, perhaps, that might be worth exploring in what—one hopes—will be the third volume of Jaffa's Lincoln trilogy.

The Meaning of Hitler

Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis. By Ian Kershaw. *Norton. 1,115 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Walter Sundberg**

On May 11, 1945 Soviet Army authorities brought a cigar box containing a partial jaw-bone and two dental bridges to Fritz Echtmann, a dental technician who had worked for Dr. Johann Hugo Blaschke, Adolf Hitler's dentist since 1938. Echtmann identified one of the bridges from records. The Nazi dictator, the chief protagonist in a war that left fifty million people slaughtered, was finally confirmed dead.

The question Ian Kershaw faces in the second volume of his massive biography is whether Hitler's life has a coherent meaning for us, or whether it is as fragmented and partial as his earthly remains. His first volume, *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris* (1998), covered Hitler's early life and rise to power. In that volume the ultimate significance of Hitler's life was not the urgent question. This final volume tells Hitler's story from the height of his acclaim in March 1936, after German troops occupied the Rhineland, to his "extinction" (Kershaw's word) in his bunker in Berlin in April 1945. Kershaw, Professor of History at the University of Sheffield, summarizes the historical meaning of Hitler's life at the outset: "Hitler's legacy," he writes in the Preface, "is one of utter destruction." The condemnation of Hitler in public opinion and scholarly research is unique in its unanimity and moral outrage. Even next to Lenin, Stalin, or Mao, Hitler stands apart as "the embodiment of modern political evil."

Walter Sundberg *is Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.*

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In Kershaw's cool and somewhat detached professional point of view, however, to call Hitler "evil," even when one has no doubt that the judgment is right, "is a theological or philosophical, rather than a historical concept." To seek the *historical* meaning of Hitler requires the examination of the publicly documented actions and behavior of the dictator in relation to the individuals, political structures, and social forces of his time. This is the task Kershaw sets himself. He documents Hitler's life in its final nine years, interpreting it in the context of domestic, diplomatic, and military policy. Events are organized chronologically, month-by-month, drawing upon a wide range of original source material—Kershaw depends heavily on Joseph Goebbels' daily journals—and secondary interpretations. The volume has notes covering two hundred pages of small print.

IT IS IMPORTANT to accept Kershaw's quest for the historical meaning of Hitler on its own terms. Kershaw has not written psychohistory. He refuses to speculate on Hitler's tortured personal life or unconscious motivations. Nor is he tempted by what Hayden White calls "metahistory," the investigation of the deep structures of imagination in cultural life. Kershaw does not deal at any length with the Nazi mythos, a twisted blend of pagan, Christian, and folk imagery, whose symbolic world captured the German mind. Instead he offers straightforward political history, trying to be as objective as he can possibly be. His effort is admirable and effective. Here is a case where the significance of a life is all the more powerfully revealed if the biographer unrelentingly piles up the undisputed facts, leaving readers to make their own judgment.

There are no unusual revelations in the biography. The value of Kershaw's effort is his steady and dependable sifting of a massive amount of scholarship. To be sure, Kershaw carefully carves out his own place. In contrast to Alan Bullock, he asserts that Hitler was not simply an opportunistic tyrant without fixed convictions, although there is much about Hitler's domestic and foreign policy that was improvised and reactive. Kershaw rejects Hans Mommsen's view that Hitler was a "weak dictator" who lacked control of the agencies of command, although it is true that Hitler could be extraordinarily detached at times, especially as his health de-

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clined and he lived in a haze of potions and pills. Kershaw stands closest to Eberhard Jaeckel and Joachim Fest, who argued a generation ago that Hitler was an intentional political leader, driven by a "worldview" or, better, ideological obsessions for which he was willing to take conscious risks and make sacrifices, even to the point of disaster. These included the desires that Germany be the dominant power in Europe, that the nation be purged of all non-German elements, and that it obtain "living space" to the east.

Last but not least, Hitler's ideology was driven by his hatred of Jews and Communists. The Soviet Union was a particular object of this double hatred; Hitler saw it as the home of what he called "Judeo-Bolshevism." Hitler made these obsessions clear from the time of *Mein Kampf*, written in 1924-25, to his final testament dictated in the bunker in April 1945. Hitler meant what he said in these public documents and proved it by acting upon his obsessions. However paranoid, hateful, and vulgar they may be, they are nevertheless the essence of the historical meaning of Hitler's life. It is these obsessions that forged his terrible will to undo and led Germany down a path of utter destruction.

The Hitler that emerges from these pages is a charismatic leader in the classic definition of Max Weber. A charismatic leader requires not only native ability, but a receptive social and psychological context. There is no doubt that Hitler had the native ability. Bolstered by an egomaniacal confidence in his own infallibility, he undertook the "historic mission" of his ideological obsessions by means of masterful speechmaking and acting. The inner circle of his regime reinforced this charisma by the expert use of propaganda, pioneering techniques of political communication.

Propaganda transformed Hitler into the image of *der Fuehrer*, to whom people related as an ideal or article of faith. "Working towards the Fuehrer" (*dem Fuehrer entgegen arbeiten*) became a fundamental motivation for the operations of government. Political and bureaucratic workers carried out their tasks at least in part by trying to do what they thought would please the Fuehrer and advance his ideology. Practical policy initiatives were justified as acts of the Fuehrer's "will." This left to Hitler the primary task of maintaining his authority, a task that he fulfilled brilliantly in his elaborately staged public appearances. He solidified this authority in endless rounds of private meetings with his immediate staff, generals, and courtiers. The accounts of these meetings that Kershaw provides, especially with the use of Goebbels' journals, are fascinating.

Hitler would have gone nowhere if ordinary German people had failed to respond to him enthusiastically. Hitler fired their imaginations and ambitions, leading the Germans to what Kershaw calls "the greatest gamble in the nation's history—to acquire complete domination of the European continent. . . . The size of the gamble itself implied an implicit willingness to court self-destruction, to invite the nemesis."

Inviting Nemesis, the god of retribution who punishes pride and arrogance, is a fitting image for what happened to Germany when it resolved to "work towards the Fuehrer." How could a culturally accomplished, economically advanced people like the Germans fall into the abyss of Hitler's obsessions? A definitive, all-encompassing answer remains elusive and perhaps is unobtainable. But it is possible to pile up the facts. Hitler maintained fear among average Germans by the use of *Sippenhaft*, that is, the arrest of entire families for the

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"crime" of one member. Each neighborhood had its spy (*Blockwart*) ready to report the slightest suspicion. Public enemies, including opposition parties, were dealt with ruthlessly in concentration camps. Indeed, these camps were originally set up to confine political opponents; only later did they take up their role in the extermination of the Jews. The Nazis ruled by fear.

Paradoxically, they also ruled by assent. Hitler ably exploited the tendency of German politics (in fact, continental politics generally) to subsume the individual under the regimented will of the nation. Freedom in this view is not an individual right protected by natural law but the hard-fought achievement of a people acting in community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) to fulfill a common purpose. In the revolutionary slogan, "liberty, equality, fraternity," fraternity is key. The Nazis forged fraternity by adopting policies that relied on the permanent mobilization of resources. These policies inevitably gravitated towards military production and thus to war itself. In war, Hitler found his natural environment. Like Napoleon before him, Hitler's fate became tied to a constant stream of military successes and then failures.

Kershaw naturally gives a great amount of attention to Hitler's Jewish policy. He elucidates the question of what Hitler knew and when he knew it and traces the efforts of his inner circle "working towards the Fuehrer" to carry out his will while preserving what we would today call "deniability" for the leader himself. Kershaw lays out the development and implementation of the policy of deportation and extermination slowly and deliberately, conforming to his chronological organization. The result is gripping and horrendous.

A WORD SHOULD BE said about the place of the churches in Kershaw's account of Hitler's reign. Kershaw assigns the churches only a minor role, which is fair enough. But the attention he does give them is not entirely satisfactory, as a couple of example—one Catholic, one Protestant—can demonstrate.

In the first volume, the signing of the Concordat with the Vatican in 1933 is seen as "an unqualified triumph for Hitler" in that it neutralized Catholic opposition to the new regime in its vulnerable first months. This is a fair assessment. After the signing, Michael Cardinal Faulhaber of Bavaria sent Hitler a handwritten letter of praise: "What the old parliament and parties did not accomplish in sixty years, your statesmanlike foresight has achieved in six months." In the second volume the Cardinal is quoted as saying in 1936 that "the Reich Chancellor undoubtedly lives in belief in God."

But that is only part of the story. During this same period Faulhaber issued frequent and courageous criticisms of Nazi attacks on the Catholic Church. Kershaw briefly alludes to them, but they leave no impression on the reader because the author provides no details and never quotes the Cardinal making a critical statement. This disparity in treatment is not entirely fair. To be sure, I cannot blame Kershaw for picking embarrassing quotations from ecclesiastical officials; such quotations are hard for any storyteller to resist. There is no doubt that the Cardinal said what he said in praise of Hitler. But it is not all he said.

The Protestant "church struggle" (*Kirchenkampf*) of the 1930s—my second example—is mentioned in twelve scattered pages of the second volume and even less space in the first. "The Church conflict was for [Hitler] no more than an irritation," asserts Kershaw. Bishop Meiser, head of the Protestant Church in Bavaria, is quoted as offering public prayers for Hitler in 1937 in which he thanks God "for every success which, through your grace, you have so far granted [Hitler] for the good of the people." Once again this is fair enough. But what about a word from the opposition? The likes of Martin Niemoeller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, both of whom engaged in heroic resistance, are mentioned only in passing and their words and

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writings are never quoted, and thus leave no impression on the reader. Here, too, I cannot exactly blame Kershaw. Meiser's repugnant public statement is part of the sad record of the German church, and I would quote it if I were telling the story. But I would also give Niemoeller at least a line.

I do not want to make too much of this. There are plenty of sources that tell what the churches did (and failed to do) during the Third Reich, and it is only because this book is so complete that it is necessary to note what it lacks. There is no doubt that Kershaw's achievement in this biography is considerable. He is the able successor to Bullock and Fest, and the two volumes of *Hitler* will be the definitive work on the subject for the foreseeable future.

America Unbounded

Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy. Edited by Robert Kagan and William Kristol. *Encounter. 401 pp. $22.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.*

***Reviewed by* Andrew J. Bacevich**

In 1996, Robert Kagan and William Kristol published a widely read article in *Foreign Affairs* advancing the case for unabashed American hegemony—benevolent, to be sure—on a globe-straddling scale. In arguing for a "neo-Reaganite" foreign policy, the authors, two of the brightest stars in the neoconservative constellation, not surprisingly found much to criticize in the Clinton Administration's approach to statecraft. But they also took aim at targets within the conservative camp—the so-called realists who, in the eyes of Kagan and Kristol, flirt with isolationism, are tone deaf to the essential moral foundation of U.S. foreign policy, and question the wisdom of a strategy aimed at maintaining perpetual global preeminence.

This impressive collection of essays is an outgrowth of that article. Its premise is stark: following the "squandered decade" of the 1990s, America, its interests, and its values are today very much at risk. But the "present dangers" of the book's title do not reduce to a particular competitor such as China or to specific threats such as rogue states or international terrorism. The immediate danger lies here at home, in America's own "flag-

Andrew J. Bacevich *is director of the Center for International Relations at Boston University.*

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ging will" and confusion about its proper role in the world. The chief threat, in short, lies with the nation's own parsimony, indifference, and irresponsibility.

To assess the implications of this brewing crisis, Kagan and Kristol have assembled an impressive roster of "conservative internationalists." Contributors include some of the right's most prominent foreign policy commentators, including Reagan-era veterans such as Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and William Bennett, along with noted scholars such as Donald Kagan and Aaron Friedberg.

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THE ESSAYS—more than a dozen in all—are grouped into four sections. The first offers a rousing defense of Pax Americana while chastising those who through absentmindedness or naiveté would throw away the advantages that accrue to the United States as the world's only superpower. The second surveys the looming challenge posed by actual or potential foreign adversaries, among them Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Russia, and China. The book's third section assesses American assets, with particular attention paid to U.S. military power (waning fast) and the state of U.S. relations with key allies (in disarray). In the concluding section, three contributors prescribe the actions necessary to revitalize U.S. policy; the first and essential ingredient, as one might imagine, is bold, visionary leadership at the very top.

Woven through the collection are several recurring themes. First, U.S. interests are inseparable from American values, and so a central focus of U.S. foreign policy must be the active and energetic promotion of those values. Second, although the United States presently spends far more on defense than any other nation, it needs to spend more still. To restore the military to its Cold War-era dimensions and to deploy a national ballistic missile defense system, the U.S. must increase Pentagon spending, perhaps by as much as one-third—a Reagan-like defense build-up undertaken without the spur of an evil empire. Finally, the country needs to get tough. When adversaries "read strength and a strong will," writes Donald Kagan in a passage that captures the book's overall tone, "they tend to retreat and subside. When they read weakness and timidity, they take risks." The pusillanimous policies of recent years—appeasing North Korea, allowing Iraq to wriggle free of sanctions, and giving China a pass on human rights, for example—must be reversed.

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As a critique of Clinton era statecraft, there is much here to commend. As a blueprint for an alternative approach to foreign policy, however, the project leaves much to be desired. The principal shortcoming has to do with what Kagan, Kristol, and their collaborators leave out. Based on the evidence here, theirs is an international order stripped of the ambiguities and complexities that inhabit the real world.

For starters, theirs is a world in which sovereign states hold sway, their authority and freedom of action seemingly without limit; no essay in the collection takes the measure of globalization. Nor is there any essay that considers the role, salutary or otherwise, of the United Nations or any other international or multinational entity. Theirs is also a world in which political considerations dominate. Kagan, Kristol, and their collaborators are preoccupied with order and with advancing the cause of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Tellingly, no essay is devoted to international economics. Nor do the authors give more than glancing attention to the way that American commercial and economic interests complicate—and at times compromise—the pursuit of American security interests and support for American political ideals.

Finally, theirs is a world in which the imprint that the United States makes on the world is seemingly confined to making its estimable political values available for universal adoption. The contributors seem to be oblivious to the possibility that the United States is something other than simply a beacon of liberty, that the values that we actually export today go well beyond the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Nor do they consider the extent to which those other values—the culture of Miramax, Eminem, Microsoft, and McDonalds—have come to define the values of the majority of Americans, or at least of those who presume to speak for that majority. In other venues, contributors to this collection do not hesitate to label that culture for what it is: shallow, frivolous, and philistine, where not simply debauched. Here they flinch from assessing the implications of that culture for how the United States is perceived in the world and for why U.S. foreign policy in the Clinton era evolved as it did. In short, the book ignores that which the editors cite at the outset as the very essence of the problem, namely us—the indifferent and irresponsible people who twice elected Bill Clinton President and would, if given the chance, likely have kept him in office for a third term.

It is far easier simply to pretend that Clinton himself was the problem. Echoing a sentiment expressed by several other contributors, William Bennett, for example, consoles himself with the knowledge that Clinton at long last is passing from the scene. He holds out hope that a President unencumbered with Clinton's dubious moral reputation may yet be able to craft the principled foreign policy that the nation deserves. Bennett looks forward to Clinton being superseded by someone "who can summon Americans to meet their great destiny as a people, who can appeal to their unique sense of idealistic patriotism and inspire them to engage in present sacrifice, when necessary, to promote future security."

But the conduct and the outcome of the 2000 presidential election—consistent with the outcome of the previous two presidential elections—provides precious little evidence that Americans want such a leader or such a foreign policy. Wishing it were otherwise—waxing nostalgic about traditional ideals, patriotism, and willingness to sacrifice—won't change the facts.

Twilight at Noon

Daemonomania. By John Crowley. *Bantam. 451 pp. $24.*

***Reviewed by* John J. Reilly**

This book is the third of the projected four in John Crowley's major novelistic treatment of gnosticism and hermeticism. As in the two prior books, *Aegypt* (1987) and *Love and Sleep* (1994), *Daemonomania* is held together, rather loosely, through the character of Pierce Moffet, a young historian in the 1970s living on a publisher's advance. We meet him in the first

John J. Reilly *is the author of* Apocalypse and Future: Notes on the Cultural History of the 21st Century *(Xlibris).*

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book as he settles down in the Upstate New York town of Blackbury Jambs to write a hermetic interpretation of history (the working title of the manuscript is also "Aegypt"). Through Moffet's friends and lovers, we are introduced to a local mystery that, in this third volume, builds to a climax of universal significance. His researches link this mystery to a parallel story that encompasses Dr. John Dee (the favorite *magus* of Queen Elizabeth I), Giordano Bruno, and the uncanny Prague of Emperor Rudolph II. The series makes use of the latest research about werewolves and witchhunts, ancient and modern, and readers interested in the academic study of the occult love it, especially since the author is generous with bibliographical information.

Daemonomania has the distinction of being one of the few books in which the world ends twice, once in 1588 and again in 1979. The author's notion of apocalypse works like this:

> When the world ends, it ends somewhat differently for each soul then alive to see it; the end doesn't come all at once but passes and repasses over the world like the shivers that pass over a horse's skin. The coming of the end might at first lift and shake just one county, one neighborhood, and not the others around it; might feelably ripple beneath the feet of these churchgoers and not of those tavern-goers down the street, shatter only the peace of this street, this family, this child of this family who at that moment lifts her eyes from the Sunday comics and knows for certain that nothing will ever be the same again.

A RECURRING THEME is that "there is more than one history of the world." Each new age looks forward to a different future and remembers a different past. The "Aegypt" of hermetic wisdom that was known to the scholars of the Renaissance has only a few points of contact with the "Egypt" of modern archeology. Modern archeologists would say that's because they have more and better information, but Crowley suggests that each discovered a different past consistent with their distinct conceptual universes. This way of looking at history is familiar to us from, for instance, Thomas Kuhn's notion of successive scientific paradigms, and from Michel Foucault's proposal that different "epistemes" governed different regions of the past. It is not novel to suggest that what seems to us to be a continuous history of ideas is really divided into "dispensations" in which people have quite different conceptions about what is reasonable and possible. At least for the purposes of this series, however, the author goes beyond intellectual history to propose that not just the sense of the possible, but the possible itself may change as one age fades into another.

The *Aegypt* series is about an archetypical story enacted during such transitions. In seventeenth-century Prague, the Emperor Rudolph, who hoped to begin a new golden age by acquiring the power to make gold, subsidized a cottage industry of alchemists, one of whom, in *Daemonomania*, succeeds. In twentieth-century New York State, a wealthy old man named Boney Rasmussen, who was terrified of death, subsidized a writer named Fellowes Kraft to ferret out the emperor's secret, which is also the secret of immortality. Crowley's hero Moffet takes up their work after Rasmussen and Kraft become literal but unobtrusive ghosts. The closest we come to a resolution of the story so far is this explanation:

> "'Well you know the basic idea . . . Kraft's idea . . . [t]hat the world—you know, reality, all this—goes through changes. Every now and then it enters a sort of period of indeterminism, anything is possible; and it stays in that passage time until, well, until . . . a certain thing is found. A certain thing that only exists, or comes to be, in that time. It's the stone, or the elixir, or the thing that Boney wanted found. If it's not found the

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> world stops changing, or never stops changing, and dies. But it's always found so far."

In the twentieth-century part of the series, the myth takes the form of the rescue of a little girl with the ability to see dead people (recapitulating the gnostic myth about the rescue of the Divine Sophia from the world of matter). The people the little girl needs to be rescued from belong to a Christian cult called "The Powerhouse," which specializes in therapy through exorcism.

The whole *Aegypt* series is anti-Christian, but anti-Christian in a way that I have never seen in fiction before. Consider this remarkable passage from *Love and Sleep*:

> "Where was it . . . said . . . that in the religious history of the West the old gods are always turning into devils, cast from their thrones into dark undergrounds, to be lords over the dead and the wicked? It had happened to . . . the Northern gods . . . who became horned devils for Christians to fear. . . . And now look, the wheel turns, Jehovah becomes the devil. Old Nobadaddy, liver-spotted greasy-bearded jealous God, spread over his hoard of blessings like the Dragon, surrounded by his sycophants singing praises, never enough though."

In a way, this is an argument from process theology: Christianity may have been true in the past, or at least effective. However, it will not be so in the coming age.

That insight is far from Crowley's final statement. Although *Daemonomania* is so relentlessly postmodern that it is hard to know what to take as a joke, as metaphor, or as the author's considered opinion, it is fairly clear that the author does take seriously the gnostic hypothesis that the world is a hoax. We come from beyond the world, but are trapped in it by a succession of frauds perpetrated by powers that do not have our best interest at heart:

> O the traps the gods have prepared for us, their worshipers; how long and well they've worked. We are older than they, far older than the oldest of them; we have come from farther away, way back beyond where they were born: but we don't know that, we have forgotten it—and they know we have forgotten it. And that's why they can do with us what they like most of the time, especially when we think we have escaped them. That's why, in other words, the world has lasted so long, and why we are still here.

Despite the commercials for the Old Time Gnosis, however, the *Aegypt* series is not primarily an indictment of Christianity or an exercise in cosmic paranoia. The Moffet character, a ferociously lapsed Catholic, is suspicious of Christianity in general. However, Crowley uses what he depicts as the provincialism and self-regard of the Powerhouse chiefly as a way to indict Moffet's own pride and sense of spiritual superiority. Moffet knows that the Powerhouse is right about the nature of magic, because he is a magician himself, in his own small way (he uses it chiefly on his girlfriend). When his magic leads to disaster, he realizes that "the greater error was the one that had tempted Pierce himself, to believe that we ourselves are the authors of the tales we live within. That's the ultimate arrogance of power, the arrogance of the gods: for all gods believe themselves self-created, and believe themselves to be issuing their own strong stories, news to us."

There are some self-referential gimmicks in the series that are more ingenious than entertaining. We have seen, for instance, that the *Aegypt* series is nominally about the writing of a book called "Aegypt." Crowley even allows himself this authorial soliloquy, put in the mouth of the would-be producer of a failed amateur production of *Faust*:

> "I so much wanted to *knit* . . . past and present, then and now. The story of the thing lost, and how it was found. More than anything I wanted it to *resolve*. And all it does is *ramify*."

Indeed it does, so much so that it is not obvious that anything remains to be said after this third volume. The world has already ended twice, after all. Nonetheless, the publisher assures us that a fourth book is planned. Some hints in *Daemonoma-*

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nia suggest that a further book might deal with the near future, as did Crowley's novella, *Beasts* (1976).

Despite these criticisms, Crowley's blend of magic, blasphemy, and postmodernism works very well as fiction. He can create uncanny affect better than anyone since Arthur Machen. Unlike Machen, he also has the sense to confine most manifestations of the supernatural to dreams and coincidences. The hermetic twilight has rarely been made to seem so plausible. Will the series persuade many people to its view of the world? Probably not, but that may be the measure of its success. The merit of these books is that they express the indeterminacy of a time of transition. The nature of twilight, however, is to resolve into either day or night.

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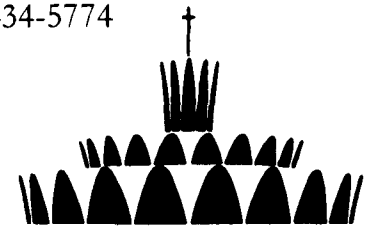

Diary of a Country Bishop

A BISHOP'S TALE: MATHIAS HOVIUS AMONG HIS FLOCK IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FLANDERS. By CRAIG HARLINE and EDDY PUT. *Yale University Press. 387 pp. $27.95.*

***Reviewed by* Charlotte Allen**

THOSE WHO THINK that today's Catholic Church has problems reining in its errant clergy should read Craig Harline and Eddy Put's summary of the new code of conduct that Mathias Hovius, Archbishop of Mechelin (not far from Brussels in today's Belgium) from 1596 to 1620, laid down for every priest in his diocese:

> [The priest] no longer appointed his illegitimate son to succeed him as pastor because he would have no children at all. He no longer merely refrained from fornication but avoided the "burning fire" of a beautiful young housekeeper. He no longer allowed his housekeeper to masquerade as his sister, especially when he bore no resemblance to her, thus risking rumors that she was his sister as Sarah was Abraham's sister. He no longer greeted women in public with a kiss. He no longer threatened to shoot parishioners who might criticize him for keeping a concubine, for he had no concubine. He no

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> longer even thought of commissioning altarpieces for the parish church that included himself on one side panel and his concubine and son on the other. . . . And he no longer tried to sleep with the maid or play indecent games with women.

If that were not enough, Hovius enjoined his parish priests that they were not to wear "silly fur hats or gloves to celebrate Mass." They were not to hear confessions from their female parishioners in dark and secluded corners. They were not to hawk, dance, or gamble. They were not to cultivate reputations as "remarkable," "distinguished," "incorrigible," "great," or "assiduous" drinkers (all those adjectives come from parish records of the time). And Hovius' priests were absolutely not to show up drunk for a baptism, lest they get the child's name wrong and have to do it over.

In other words, Hovius' job was to put the kibosh on the Bruegelian Catholicism of medieval Flanders and bring the Counter-Reformation to his diocese. This was no easy task for any bishop in the Europe wracked by the religious and nationalistic wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in Flanders the bloody struggles between Catholics and Protestants for converts and power took place right on home soil.

Hovius, however, seemed up to his daunting task. Lowly of birth, the son of a Mechelin fuller (the era's equivalent of a dry cleaner), who had shown ability rather than brilliance in school, and far from handsome, with glowering eyebrows and a long fleshy chin pointed like a pie-wedge (numerous portraits of him are reproduced in the book), Hovius was not loved. But he was tough, prodding the priests in his 450 parishes not only to behave themselves but to acquire real learning in seminaries (the pastors of the Middle Ages had typically apprenticed with their priest-uncles, then inherited their parishes), forcing a local monastery to turn over its rents to support his threadbare bishopric, weeding out heresies, casting a cold eye on the dubious saints' relics and miracles with which Flanders still abounded. As Archbishop of Mechelin, Hovius was primate of the Low Countries. By the end of his life, he had wrestled the Flemish church into a rationalized, bureaucratized, and decorous institution characteristic of the "modern" Catholicism envisaged in the reforms of the Council of Trent.

Fortunately for scholars (and for us), Hovius kept a detailed daybook of all his activities—his building projects, his ceaseless and wearying parish visits, and the endless round of petitions and disputes, on issues ranging from pornography and marriage annulments to questions of heresy—that he adjudicated in his busy ecclesiastical court. Most of the journal has been lost, but in 1987, Harline, a history professor at Brigham Young University, and Put, a Belgian archivist, discovered in a seminary library in Mechelin the last volume, covering the period from 1617 to Hovius' death. This book is the fruit of their reconstruction of Hovius' life from that diary and other contemporary documents.

Harline, author of the well-received *Burdens of Sister Margaret: Inside a Seventeenth-Century Convent*, decided to focus on Hovius for his second book as a corrective to the worthy but perhaps exaggerated preoccupation of today's medievalists with eclectic and colorful "ordinary" Catholicism in contrast to the official kind. Harline and Put decided that the career of a bishop would offer as good a vantage point as any for looking into the seventeenth-century social world. They thought that since "religious life was a

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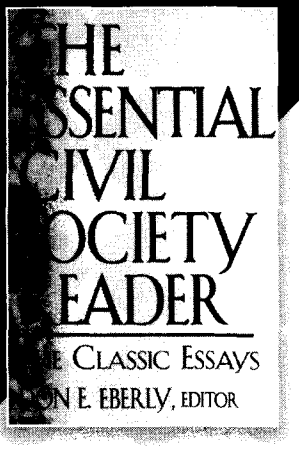

"Few know or care more about civil society than Don Eberly, so it's not surprising that he has gathered in this book one of the finest collections of essays available on the subject. You'll agree with some, disagree with others, and learn from them all." **E.J. Dionne, Jr.,** Syndicated Columnist & Editor of *Community Works: The Revival of Civil Society in America*

"Emily Dickinson called poetry the best words in the best order. These essays are the poetry of our national conversation on civil society. If you want an accessible, everything-under-one-roof introduction to our current social condition, you will not find a better book." **David Blankenhorn,** President, Institute for American Values & Co-editor of *The Fatherhood Movement*

"The revival of scholarly and public policy interest in the 'institutions of civil society' is one of the more encouraging intellectual and social movements of the past decade. Still, much work needs to be done to clarify the normative tasks and limits of these institutions and to explain how they should properly relate to government, individual citizens, the market and to each other. This collection of essay helps set the stage for the next round in the 'civil society debate'." **Keith J. Pavilschek,** Fellow, Center for Public Justice

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constant negotiation among all parties rather than a simple matter of the hierarchy proclaiming and the flock obeying, then being a bishop was hardly the mundane, absolutist task it has been made out to be."

MAKING ONE'S WAY as a Catholic prelate in seventeenth-century Flanders required negotiating skills and many other skills besides. To the north lay the staunchly Calvinist Dutch Republic, product of a protracted war of secession that had begun in the 1560s, when Hovius, born in 1542, was a young man. Until the Dutch formally declared their independence in 1581, more or less ending the strife, all of the Low Countries belonged to Philip II of Spain, who had inherited them from his father, the Flanders-born Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

After the Dutch breakaway, Flanders became known as the Spanish Netherlands, an uncomfortable moniker. Even the Catholics of the Low Countries detested the dour and culturally alien Philip, who tried to reduce their once-autonomous territories to a Spanish province and who introduced the Inquisition to Flanders. At the very end of his life in 1599, Philip turned the Spanish Netherlands over to his daughter Isabella and her husband, Prince Albert of Austria, and made it a quasi-independent archduchy. Isabella and Albert were popular sovereigns, and a measure of peace finally prevailed.

By then, the city of Mechelin, once a robust medieval commercial center with a population of thirty thousand, had been thoroughly trashed in the decades-long civil strife. During the 1560s, as Hovius was preparing for ordination, bands of Calvinist iconoclasts raged through Mechelin burning crucifixes and murdering priests and nuns. Then came a Spanish reprisal-cum-Inquisition session, so nasty that most of Mechelin's Catholics decided they preferred the Dutch Protestant rebels. The Spanish Fury, which ruined Mechelin's economy, was followed by the English Fury, an invasion in 1580 launched by the Dutch ally Elizabeth I that included a spree of burning, looting, and clergy-killing so fearful that Hovius escaped with his life only by disguising himself in a peasant's smock and sneaking out of the city.

The incident undoubtedly toughened him for his later episcopal duties. One of his first acts as bishop was to preside over the last execution for heresy in Belgium, the burying alive in 1597 of Anna Utenhove, a forty-five-year-old Anabaptist servant woman who refused to take holy communion (the incident made a Protestant martyr out of Anna). Since he was not independently wealthy and his bishopric was penniless—the cathedral was thoroughly wrecked—he spent the next few years bleeding white the monks of Affligem, a wealthy Benedictine monastery nearby that Philip II had designated as Mechelin's archdiocesan milk cow. The monks appealed to Rome for relief, but Hovius had allies in the papal court. He was a bishop who did what he had to do.

HIS PRINCIPAL TASK was to create order out of the entertaining mess that was clerical life in medieval Flanders. There was actually a shortage of parish priests in the Mechelin archdiocese, not for want of ordinations (Hovius ordained about one hundred new priests a year), but because most of those ordained would do practically anything—find a chaplaincy with the nobility, attach themselves to the cathedral as canons—rather than serve in a rural church. Country pastors literally had to live off the tithes from their parishioners' fields. One priest armed himself and his father, mother, and sister with pitchforks to collect the sheaves of flax and grain that he considered his due at harvest time. Another pastor was so poor that he had no recto-

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ry and slept inside his rundown church along with his farm animals. His parishioners complained that his hens laid eggs on the altar, his pigs tore an altar cloth on a feast day, and his doves flew about during Mass showering those in attendance with droppings. The same priest was alleged to have hit a parishioner over the head with a beer mug after the parishioner accused him of sleeping with his wife.

There were also scandals at convents. At one religious house belonging to a supposedly contemplative order of nuns, the ever-popular chaplain, Jan Kerremans, ate at the sisters' table, lent them his vestments for a lark to wear to church, and often slept over instead of returning to the male monastery where he was supposed to be the abbot. Reports circulated that Kerremans was having an affair with one of the nuns, Sister Joanna, a frequent horseback-riding companion of his and a thorn in Hovius' side. At another convent, the nuns and their confessor drank beer and traded bawdy jests well into the night. At a third nunnery housing a nursing order, one Sister Cornelia was accused of taking money from a wealthy old patient that she said went to the poor but that actually went to decorate her cell with silk curtains and an expensive leaded-glass window.

Stories like these fueled Protestant fires on the other side of the Dutch border, and Hovius had to be a stern disciplinarian as well as a fair adjudicator of these motley disputes. To upgrade the priesthood (and establish control over it), he built a diocesan seminary that would provide a solid, subsidized education to clerical aspirants, who would then, beholden to their bishop, be funneled into rural pastorates at his direction. He ordered the contemplative nuns, including the truculent Sister Joanna, to stay inside their convents (he had less luck with Kerremans, who was subsequently accused of fathering another nun's child but had political connections to protect him). He convened diocesan councils that set standards for instructing his lay flock in the basic tenets and rituals of their faith, and he oversaw the publication of Counter-Reformation propaganda that paid the Calvinists back with equal slanders for their own tracts defaming Catholics. And he worked his way through a minefield of ecclesiastical politics, fending off interference from papal nuncios and territorially ambitious Jesuits on one side and from Isabella and Albert, who considered the church to be part of their secular patrimony, on the other.

Hovius was not a saint, and when he died at age seventy-eight after a protracted conglomeration of miserable old-age diseases, no crowds swarmed around his corpse cutting off pieces of his clothing for relics. But he was "a regular shoulder rubber with all of society," as Harline and Put write. "He was simply a flesh-and-blood prelate who descended from his throne and 'muddied his boots' in the filthy streets, hopeless roads, and eternally damp fields of the archdiocese." Further, Hovius was a "diligent shepherd . . . and gracious host of exhausting audiences with people from the entire social spectrum, who crossed his tiled floor to tell the deepest secrets or recount the simplest troubles."

The bishop recorded it all in his daybook, and he—and his biographers Harline and Put—have left all of us the richer in understanding, not just of his own time, but of the comic frailties of human nature that don't change with the times.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Spirit of the Liturgy. By Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Translated by John Saward. *Ignatius. 232 pp. $17.95.*

The Church is called together to worship and adore the Triune God. Such is the theme of Cardinal Ratzinger's thoughtful meditations on the Liturgy. Just as ancient Israel was called as a people to worship God, so the life of the Church is ordered toward worship. Ratzinger is less than enthusiastic about some of the liturgical changes that have taken root in Catholic worship in the last generation, and in this little volume he attempts to recover something of the theological richness of the Church's tradition. Lost amidst so much experimentation and emphasis on creativity has been the "givenness" of liturgy, the sense that "one cannot do with it what one will." The book

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includes sections on liturgy and time, on the significance of the church building, on direction in liturgical prayer, reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, music, and more. The most controversial chapter is Ratzinger's critique of the practice of celebrating the Eucharist *versus populum*, that is, the priest facing the congregation. Not only is the historical basis for current practice meager, says Ratzinger, it has the effect of closing the Liturgy in on itself. "Looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord." There is also a spirited defense of kneeling (not all Catholic churches built today have kneelers), which is not, says Ratzinger, a form of accommodation to outmoded cultural patterns. Kneeling, he writes, "is an expression of Christian culture, which transforms the existing culture through a new and deeper knowledge and experience of God." If this book is not the original work that Romano Guardini's *Spirit of the Liturgy* was, it is nevertheless a timely and illuminating series of reflections that breathe the spirit of the Liturgy.

— *Robert Louis Wilken*

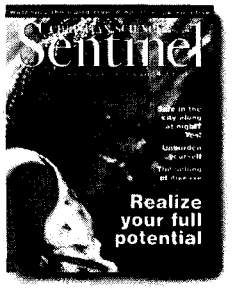
ISRAELIS AND THE JEWISH TRADITION: AN ANCIENT PEOPLE DEBATING ITS FUTURE. By DAVID HARTMAN. *Yale University Press. 174 pp. $18.50.*

This book comprises Hartman's 1998 Terry Lectures at Yale University. It is a sustained meditation on Jewish messianism and its political implications for the State of Israel's perpetual identity crisis. Hartman, who directs what is probably the most influential center for intra-Jewish and interreligious dialogue in Israel, is in a unique position to offer some fresh insights on how a Jewish state can successfully integrate the vision of a Jewish society governed by the Jewish tradition and its law (Halakhah) with the humanistic-democratic political vision of the West. In doing this, Hartman opts for the more "nomic" messianism of Moses Maimonides (eleventh century), with its emphasis on the creation of a just society, rather than for the messianism of Judah Halevi (tenth century), with its greater apocalyptic emphasis. Hartman sees Maimonidean messianism as being able to inspire a more universalistic Jewish ethics and politics than the more ethnocentric view of Halevi. All in all, Hartman raises very important questions and suggests some avenues for answering them. His book adds to the growing list of works in current political theory from a decidedly Jewish perspective.

— *David Novak*

DESTINED FOR LIBERTY: THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF KAROL WOJTYLA/JOHN PAUL II. By JAROSLAW KUPCZAK, O.P. *Catholic University of America Press. 161 pp. $44.95 cloth, $22.95 paper.*

Kupczak offers a finely wrought examination of the anthropology and ethical theory of John Paul II. Often concentrating on the early writings such as the *Habilitationsschrift* and the Lublin lectures (neither has been translated into English), the author indicates where the young thinker incorporated Scheler's phenomenological value ethics, Kant's formalistic ethics of duty, and Aquinas' understanding of the rational desire of the will into his own synthesis of human action and value. This synthesis is evident in Wojtyla's early writings on sexuality and marriage in which he notes that sexual emotions are properly concerned with the value of the entire person as he or she incarnates masculinity or femininity. Sexual drives, then, need to be purified by chastity and elevated to the truly personal level if they

"They are able because they think they are able"
—Virgil


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are to fulfill their proper social role. Throughout his writings, Wojtyla continued to combine phenomenological and metaphysical analyses. His early appropriation of Scheler kept him close to the careful scrutiny of human experience, of what is unique and irreducible in the acting person. At the same time, he was convinced that experience must ultimately give way to the essential and universal judgments characteristic of metaphysics. In his examination of personal acts, Wojtyla seeks to describe the complex of elements issuing forth in human actions, and also to ask the further question about the good towards which such actions must tend. A guiding idea throughout is that the person develops and realizes himself through his actions, even as these actions remain revelatory of the person. Among the many merits of this book is Kupczak's indication of the substantial continuity of Wojtyla's thought over the course of his life with themes adumbrated in his early years appearing in fuller mode in various papal encyclicals.

— *Thomas Guarino*

Kant and the Problem of God. By Gordon E. Michalson, Jr. *Blackwell. 216 pp. $70.95 cloth, $30.95 paper.*

Kant's distinction between practical and pure reason and the priority he ascribed to the former has deeply influenced modern theology. It has offered a way to parse science and religion, to the presumed advantage of the latter. The distinctive human vocation in the realm of values can be championed within a cosmos defined by the cool eye of scientific inquiry. Even more important, the dynamism and authority that Kant assigned to practical reason gives moral meaning to the increasingly rapid and violent pace of modern cultural change. The imperatives of autonomy can take on a messianic hue. Gordon Michalson, Jr. has engaged the moral and religious significance of Kant throughout his scholarly career, and in this study he argues that the advantages that Kant provides to the modern theologian are a fool's gold. Kant's approach may hold at bay the antihumanism of modern science (we are just clever animals in an insignificant corner of a vast cosmos), and it may serve as a bulwark against the ruthless rationality of economic efficiency and the putative demands of progress, but Michalson concludes that Kant's approach to the question of God makes theology less and not more

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plausible. Governed by a "principle of immanence," Kant's project makes God a servant of human purposes. This thesis is not novel; Karl Barth also emphasized Kant's reduction of theology to anthropology. However, Michalson provides helpful orientation with respect to the basic dynamic. His explanation of Kant's interest in moral community and the relation of historical and social affairs nicely complements an account of Kant's view of the role of God in the moral life. Nonetheless, the categories of Michalson's analysis are metaphysical not soteriological, and this obscures the full nature of Kant's great appeal to modern theologians, as well as his baleful influence. For example, in many ways Heidegger saw and sought to avoid Kant's "principle of immanence" and the consequent subordination of "transcendence" to the mean sphere of human needs and purposes. Yet, Heidegger is even less congenial to Christian theology than Kant, for in an important sense Christianity *is* anthropocentric: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Kant's influence on theology, and its pernicious effect, stems from the fact that he shares so much with classical Christianity. His thought often runs on the same rails. To show more accurately just how Kant subverts the theological project, Michalson must more forthrightly juxtapose the Christian principles of immanence and transcendence—the Word made flesh and the risen Lord—with Kant's principles. After all, the issue is not whether Kant supports or undermines "theism," a notion that is itself an invention of the Enlightenment. The key question for theology is whether Kant can make any sense out of who the scriptures say Jesus *is* rather than abjuring the task and simply correcting the apostolic witness in light of some higher "religious" principle.

—R. R. Reno

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A BETTER HOPE: RESOURCES FOR A CHURCH CONFRONTING CAPITALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND POSTMODERNITY. By STANLEY HAUERWAS. *Brazos. 288 pp. $19.99 paper.*

The irrepressibly high-spirited ethicist of Duke goes inveighing again, gleefully tossing polemical darts at the three villains of his subtitle. He acknowledges that there is little in these essays that he has not said before and often, but he believes he must be as persistent as are the ills that he attacks. Capitalism and democracy as defined—his critics would say caricatured—by Hauerwas are certainly deserving of attack, and his crafty postmodernist critique of postmodernism does not fail to charm. This is also an occasion to welcome Brazos Press, a new imprint of Baker Book House.

WHY RELIGION MATTERS: THE FATE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN AN AGE OF DISBELIEF. By HUSTON SMITH. *HarperSanFrancisco. 290 pp. $25.*

One may argue whether ours is an age of disbelief, as Huston Smith would have it, or an age of credulity, as Peter Berger claims. But that is neither here nor there with respect to Smith's main point, which is to propose, against the innumerable "spiritualities" with which we are culturally inundated, that ultimate wisdom and human flourishing are to be discovered in the historically grounded and communally normative religious traditions of the world. Smith, a longtime student of comparative religion and author of *The World's Religions*, pays major attention to the several major traditions but is in sensibility, if not always in doctrine, a Christian. This book is a useful corrective to the common tendency to pit spirituality against religion.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU AND THE MAKING OF FRANCE. By ANTHONY LEVI. *Carroll & Graf. 256 pp. $26.*

Richelieu (1585-1642) usually gets a very bad press as a ruthless manipulator of power, but Levi, author of *Guide to French Literature*, contends that he tried faithfully to serve his Church and his king, and succeeded in his fashion, with the result that the nation of France was born. An instance of Richelieu's nice distinction between the secular and ecclesiastical is that, at the same time he was gathering armies to wage war against the pope, he wrote the pope humbly asking for a dispensation from reading his daily office because of the pressing duties of military command. The text is too often clogged with seemingly endless lists of names, family connections, and

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geographical details, but Richelieu comes through as a man of remarkable talent, cunning, and devotion.

Incorrect Thoughts: Notes on Our Wayward Culture. By John Leo. *Transaction. 267 pp. $29.95.*

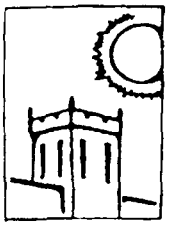
Political Correctness is frequently no more than an epithet that the right flings at opinions and postures of the left. For some years now, John Leo of *U.S. News & World Report* has been effectively making the case that PC is, in fact, a connected movement of many parts, with none of the parts being good for liberal values such as civility, freedom of expression, and toleration of real diversity. Leo is the more effective because he exemplifies those values, writing in a conversational tone that invites his readers to entertain the possibility that truth does not come in packaged party lines. The state of the academy, conflicts of feminisms, pro-choice denial of choice, and why journalists behave as they do are among the myriad subjects addressed in these pithy essays on a culture that is, Mr. Leo regretfully notes, gravely wayward.

The Winning Side: Questions on Living the Culture of Life. By Charles E. Rice. *St. Brendan's Institute. 372 pp. $26.95 paper.*

The author is a longtime professor of law at the University of Notre Dame and a relentless champion of the culture of life. This book, presented in the form of succinct questions and answers, summarizes arguments he has been making, with apparently inexhaustible energy, over the years. Of particular interest is his claim that—as a consequence of the judicial usurpation of politics and the corruption of civil society—the constitutional order of the U.S. is dead and cannot be revived. It can, however, be used to protect religious freedom as serious Christians go about the business of building communities of virtue, beginning with the family. Rice's grim portrayal of our cultural and political circumstance notwithstanding, this is a book marked by a bracing confidence that the friends of life are, in fact, on the winning side.

Women and the Future of the Family. By Elizabeth Fox-Genovese et al. *Baker. 108 pp. $11.99 paper.*

Fox-Genovese's Kuyper Lecture, sponsored by the Center for Public Justice, with responses by Stanley J. Grenz, Mardi Keyes, and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. A bracing critique



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of sundry feminisms that have been very bad for women, joined to a believable call for a renewal of male-female relations on the basis of self-giving and sexual difference.

SOLZHENITSYN: A SOUL IN EXILE. By JOSEPH PEARCE. *Baker. 334 pp. $19.95.*

Pearce, a young British writer, is churning out books at a fierce rate, including, most recently, biographies of Tolkien, Wilde, and Chesterton, and a fine book of biographical sketches of celebrated literary converts to Catholicism. There can be no doubt that Alexander Solzhenitsyn is one of the great moral figures on the world stage, and the present book neither adds to nor detracts from that judgment. Pearce, who makes too much of one long interview granted him by Solzhenitsyn, offers a repeat of familiar materials and a running rebuttal of his hero's many critics. The book is further weakened by the author's effort to enlist Solzhenitsyn in his enthusiasm for E. F. Schumacher's "small is beautiful" critique of the modern world, and for Chesterton's notion of economic "distributism." With some original research, critical intelligence, and authorial restraint in grinding his own axes, *Solzhenitsyn* might have been a very good book.

FAITH, SCIENCE & UNDERSTANDING. By JOHN POLKINGHORNE. *Yale University Press. 208 pp. $19.95.*

The author, a past president and now fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, is a noted scientist-theologian who has made distinguished contributions in the field of particle physics. In this somewhat leisurely reflection he examines the history of the science-and-religion question over the last century and more, and offers sympathetic critiques of the contributions of contemporaries such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, Thomas Torrance, and Paul Davies.

THE LAST LETTERS OF THOMAS MORE. Edited by ALVARO DE SILVA. *Eerdmans. 208 pp. $20.*

In the twenty-four surviving letters written from his imprisonment in the tower in 1534 to his death a year and a half later, we are presented with More the Christian humanist and martyr in the richness of his spiritual and moral integrity. Each letter is also a literary treasure, and the editor's introduction explaining what More meant by "comfort," "company," and "conscience" is simply splendid. Warmly recommended.

CELTIC FLAME: THE BURDEN OF PATRICK. By T. M. MOORE. *Xlibris (Xlibris.com). 119 pp. $25 cloth, $16 paper, $8 e-book.*

Poet-theologian Moore has done something truly admirable. He has cast into verse paraphrase St. Patrick's *Confessions* and *Letter Against the Soldiers of Coroticus*, along with the well-known *Patrick's Breastplate*, which was probably not written by the saint. Patrick was immersed in the language and thought of Scripture, and Moore provides alongside the text the biblical references, as well as unobtrusive footnotes explaining historical obscurities. Through the accretions of legend and piety surrounding Patrick, some charming and some distracting, Moore provides an encounter with the fifth-century bishop of pastoral devotion, stout orthodoxy, and unwavering courage in the face of opponents. A nice ecumenical touch is that Moore is a Presbyterian minister. *Celtic Flame* charms, instructs, and inspires, which is a lot for one little book to do.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

As the New Millennium Begins

At the conclusion of the Year of the Great Jubilee, John Paul II issued a 23,000 word apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Inuente* (As the New Millennium Begins), in which he reflects on the many special events of the year, including the World Youth Day that brought more than two million young people to Rome, and the historic visit to the Holy Land. Of particular interest is what he has to say about Christian unity and the dialogue with culture and other religions.

In view of the controversy over the declaration *Dominus Iesus* (see "To Say Jesus is Lord," Public Square, November 2000), one notes in the following the implications of the assertion that in Christ the Church is undivided. (Where not otherwise specified, the quotes in the Pope's statement are from the documents of the Second Vatican Council.) The Pope writes: "And what should we say of the urgent task of fostering communion in the delicate area of ecumenism? Unhappily, as we cross the threshold of the new millennium, we take with us the sad heritage of the past. The Jubilee has offered some truly moving and prophetic signs, but there is still a long way to go.

"By fixing our gaze on Christ, the Great Jubilee has given us a more vivid sense of the Church as a mystery of unity. 'I believe in the one Church': what we profess in the Creed has its ultimate foundation in Christ, in whom the Church is undivided (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:11-13). As his Body, in the unity which is the gift of the Spirit, she is indivisible. The reality of division among the Church's children appears at the level of history, as the result of human weakness in the way we accept the gift which flows endlessly from Christ the Head to his Mystical Body. The prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room—'as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us' (John 17:21)—is both revelation and invocation. It reveals to us the unity of Christ with the Father as the wellspring of the Church's unity and as the gift which in him she will constantly receive until its mysterious fulfillment at the end of time. This unity is concretely embodied in the Catholic Church, despite the human limitations of her members, and it is at work in varying degrees in all the elements of holiness and truth to be found in the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities. As gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, these elements lead them continuously towards full unity.

"Christ's prayer reminds us that this gift needs to be received and developed ever more profoundly. The invocation '*ut unum sint*' is, at one and the same time, a binding imperative, the strength that sustains us, and a salutary rebuke for our slowness and closed-heartedness. It is on Jesus' prayer and not on our own strength that we base the hope that even within history we shall be able to reach full and visible communion with all Christians.

"In the perspective of our renewed post-Jubilee pilgrimage, I look with great hope to the Eastern Churches, and I pray for a full return to that exchange of gifts which enriched the Church of the first millennium. May the memory of the time when the Church breathed with 'both lungs' spur Christians of East and West to walk together in unity of faith and with respect for legitimate diversity, accepting and sustaining each other as members of the one Body of Christ.

"A similar commitment should lead to the fostering of ecumenical dialogue with our brothers and sisters belonging to the Anglican Communion and the Ecclesial Communities born of the Reformation. Theological discussion on essential points of faith and Christian morality, cooperation in works of charity, and above all the great ecumenism of holiness will not

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fail, with God's help, to bring results. In the meantime we confidently continue our pilgrimage, longing for the time when, together with each and every one of Christ's followers, we shall be able to join wholeheartedly in singing: 'How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers live in unity!' (Psalm 133:1)"

The reflection on dialogue with other religions invokes the "dread specter" of wars of religion that have afflicted humanity in the past and must never be allowed to recur. John Paul II writes: "Dialogue, however, cannot be based on religious indifferentism, and we Christians are in duty bound, while engaging in dialogue, to bear clear witness to the hope that is within us (cf. 1 Peter 3:15). We should not fear that it will be considered an offense to the identity of others what is rather the joyful proclamation of a gift meant for all, and to be offered to all with the greatest respect for the freedom of each one: the gift of the revelation of the God who is Love, the God who 'so loved the world that He gave His only Son' (John 3:16). As the recent Declaration *Dominus Iesus* stressed, this cannot be the subject of a dialogue understood as negotiation, as if we considered it a matter of mere opinion: rather, it is a grace which fills us with joy, a message which we have a duty to proclaim.

"The Church therefore cannot forgo her missionary activity among the peoples of the world. It is the primary task of the *missio ad gentes* to announce that it is in Christ, 'the Way, and the Truth, and the Life' (John 14:6), that people find salvation. Interreligious dialogue 'cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation.' This missionary duty, moreover, does not prevent us from approaching dialogue with an attitude of profound willingness to listen. We know in fact that, in the presence of the mystery of grace, infinitely full of possibilities and implications for human life and history, the Church herself will never cease putting questions, trusting in the help of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth (cf. John 14:17), whose task it is to guide her 'into all the truth' (John 16:13).

"This is a fundamental principle not only for the endless theological investigation of Christian truth, but also for Christian dialogue with other philosophies, cultures, and religions. In the common experience of humanity, for all its contradictions, the Spirit of God, who 'blows where he wills' (John 3:8), not infrequently reveals signs of his presence which help Christ's followers to understand more deeply the message which they bear. Was it not with this humble and trust-filled openness that the Second Vatican Council sought to read 'the signs of the times'? Even as she engages in an active and watchful discernment aimed at understanding the 'genuine signs of the presence or the purpose of God,' the Church acknowledges that she has not only given, but has also 'received from the history and from the development of the human race.' This attitude of openness, combined with careful discernment, was adopted by the Council also in relation to other religions. It is our task to follow with great fidelity the Council's teaching and the path which it has traced."

In this document, as in almost all his official statements, one is struck by the force and care with which John Paul delineates the ways in which his pontificate is enacted in obedience to, and fulfillment of, the Second Vatican Council. Professor Russell Hittinger, an astute student of the modern papacy, has recently written that the single greatest achievement of this pontificate is that "it has secured the interpretation of the Council." That has the ring of truth. Although there are still some who do not understand this, John Paul II has brought to an end more than thirty years of partisan conflict between the proponents of the "spirit" of the Council, on the one hand, and the proponents of the "letter" of the Council, on the other. And he has done so in a way that reveals that both the spirit and the letter of the Council are ever so much more radical and more promising than either party usually imagined.

FT

TAKING RISKS FOR FREEDOM

It has been said that history is made by people who show up at meetings, stay 'til the end, and then write the minutes, and there is a lot to that. Similarly, movements are launched by people who run the risk of being viewed as fanatics, so relentless are they in advocating, lobbying, badgering, and generally making a nuisance of themselves that, as in the parable of the judge and the importunate woman, attention is paid. Among those who in the 1990s took that risk are Nina Shea of Freedom House and Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, and the result is growing international concern for religious freedom and the establishment of that concern as an integral part of U.S. foreign policy.

"Defending the Faiths," by Allen D. Hertzke and Daniel Philpott, published in the distinguished foreign policy journal the *National Interest*, explains what has happened and explores future prospects. Laws enacted by Congress and the setting up of a

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commission on religious freedom in the State Department have not met with universal applause. "With a few exceptions," the authors say, "the mainstream media and foreign policy commentariat have reacted coolly to these developments, suspecting that the attention the issue has received is merely a sop to conservative Christian lobbies. But, pursued wisely, the elevation of religious freedom can properly serve the national interest. It is congruent not only with international human rights covenants, but with our founding tradition and basic values. It complements the promotion of civil society and democracy, and it may easily be pursued in tandem with our other interests." Perhaps not "easily," but it can be done.

One reason the denial of religious freedom is becoming a bigger issue is that religion is becoming a bigger issue. Hertzke and Philpott write: "Behind the persecution lies one of the great surprises of the late twentieth century: a global resurgence of faith. Indeed, secularizing trends in Western Europe and among a thin, if influential, stratum of global intellectual elites now stand out as exceptions to more general trends. As Samuel Huntington has observed, persecution endures precisely because religion matters, and matters increasingly. When religion becomes important to people, dictatorial governments 'will insist on controlling it, suppressing it, regulating it, prohibiting it, and manipulating it to their own advantage.'"

As important as religious freedom is in itself, it also serves other ends. "As Huntington has demonstrated convincingly, Western Christianity in particular has encouraged democratization. Its emphasis on the dignity of the individual, the equality of all souls before God, and the autonomy of churches from state control (now embraced by both Catholic and major Protestant traditions) fosters a respect for civil rights and institutional pluralism. Christianity may also foster democracy by molding opinion and encouraging opposition to authoritarian rule."

There is a particularly striking correlation between Christianity and democratization. "Today, nearly nine out of every ten of the nations Freedom House designates as 'free' are Christian countries, while others, such as South Korea and Taiwan, have substantial Christian populations and Christian leaders. Contrary to secular intellectuals' image of Christianity as backward or colonial, its indigenous growth outside the West is one of the signal democratizing forces around the globe today. A policy promoting religious freedom, then, will alert vulnerable Christian minorities—and also independent Muslims, Buddhists, Jews and others—that the United States stands with their struggle for free expression."

"Special Pleading"

Nonetheless, some liberal Catholics and Protestants (the latter typically connected with the National Council of Churches) have ranged from being ambivalent to downright hostile to this movement against religious persecution—in part, one may fairly say, because they deeply resent the fact that their conservative opponents have so neatly stolen the human rights card from the liberal social justice deck. But they also present arguments, the chief one being that promoting the cause of persecuted Christians is an instance of "special pleading" that ignores other religions. The fact is that the leaders of the movement have been most particularly careful to include all believers, although another fact is that many of the most egregious instances of persecution in the world are against Christians.

As Hertzke and Philpott note, "The charge of special pleading is particularly puzzling. Would the same critics have considered human rights campaigns on behalf of South African blacks, Soviet Jews, East European dissidents, the Argentine 'disappeared,' the eradication of female circumcision, or the banning of land mines to be special pleading? As Jacob Heilbrunn commented in the *New Republic*, 'This seems a remarkable attitude for a human rights activist, since by definition, all arguments on behalf of all persecuted groups—racial minorities, political minorities, ethnic minorities, etc.—are "special pleadings" intended to help "certain classes" of victims.' Human rights campaigns on behalf of particular parties are the only kind of human rights campaigns there are."

In thousands of local churches, on campuses, and elsewhere, the movement against religious persecution continues to gain steam. Hertzke and Philpott suggest that the test case may be Sudan, and whether an international protest can be launched comparable to that against apartheid in South Africa in years past. The Islamist regime of Sudan, supported by Chinese and Canadian investment in its oil resources, has used man-made famine, slavery, forced conversions, and other atrocities against its black Christian and animist population. Freedom House estimates that up to two million people have been killed in the past decade.

As Hertzke and Philpott do not say, however, it is very difficult to muster the same forces against the Sudanese regime as rallied against apartheid. After all, the apartheid regime was white and made a very big point of being part of the West, while the tyrants in Khartoum are "people of color" and champion militant Islam against the presumably decadent West. Apartheid South Africa was also, as it was said,

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"constructively engaged" with the U.S. So protesting apartheid had the panache of being, at the same time, a protest against the West and against America, a big advantage in the view from the left. As Albert Camus observed, to a certain ideological mindset some murders are more politically interesting than others. Then too, there is the soft bigotry, as it is aptly called, that cuts a certain moral slack for genocide among people of color, as we have seen elsewhere in Africa. So one should not expect to see the protest against religious persecution, in Sudan or elsewhere, become as fashionable as the anti-apartheid movement was. The hard work will continue to be done by people who are prepared to run the risk of being viewed as obsessed by their belief that it is wrong to harass, penalize, jail, torture, kill, or otherwise maltreat people because of what they believe.

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VELVET GLOVE, IRON FIST, AND IRONY

It has been said in these pages and elsewhere that, looking back now, it is apparent that Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, written at the beginning of the thirties, has turned out to be more prophetic than George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, written at the end of the forties. I did not know, however, until I read Jeffrey Meyers' new biography, *Orwell: Wintry Conscience of a Generation* (Norton), that Huxley expected things to turn out this way, and delicately explained why to Orwell in a letter of October 1949. Huxley praised *Nineteen Eighty-Four* very highly: "Agreeing with all that the critics have written of it, I need not tell you, yet once more, how fine and how profoundly important the book is." He then went on to say:

> The philosophy of the ruling minority in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a sadism which has been carried to its logical conclusion by going beyond sex and denying it. Whether in actual fact the policy of the boot-on-the-face can go on indefinitely seems doubtful. My own belief is that the ruling oligarchy will find less arduous and wasteful ways of governing and of satisfying its lust for power, and that these ways will resemble those which I described in *Brave New World*. . . . Within the next generation I believe that the world's rulers will discover that infant conditioning and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons, and the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience. . . . The change will be brought about as a result of a felt need for increased efficiency.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, like *Animal Farm* before it (Meyers reports that Orwell rushed around London bookshops taking *Animal Farm* out of the children's section and putting it in the adult section), was of inestimable importance during the Cold War in alerting people to the reality of Soviet totalitarianism. Our debt to Orwell on that score can never be fully repaid. But Huxley recognized a half century ago what is now evident to all, that the brutal boot-on-the-face tyranny of communism was terribly inefficient. There are still in the world plenty of tyrants who rule by the boot, machete, club, and machine gun, and there likely will be for a long time. But the more sophisticated who want the total control that is *totalitarian* tyranny will resort to means more like those depicted in *Brave New World*—baby hatcheries, cloning, the elimination of the unfit, and the exclusion of moral and historical reasoning by a uniform sense of therapeutic well-being induced by what Huxley called *soma* and is today chillingly similar to multiple variations on Prozac. It will be a softer, and therefore more efficient, totalitarianism.

In his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II speaks of what can happen when moral reasoning is eliminated from public life and politics is reduced to the manipulation of desires and images in order to secure the acquiescence of a compliant majority. The result he calls "thinly disguised totalitarianism." The danger at present and in the future is more Huxley's velvet glove than Orwell's iron fist, although, to be sure, the velvet glove is not entirely absent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and the compassionate and gentle manipulations of *Brave New World* only thinly disguise the iron fist.

Meyers' *Orwell* is, by the way, a very good read. One does wish, however, that he had not tried to explain Orwell's relentless truth-telling and life of self-deprivation in pop psychology terms of guilt feelings. It is more convincing that Orwell's determination to tell the truth was just that, a determination to tell the truth because he hated brutal and self-serving lies, and because he believed that decent people should counter lies with truth. Then too, Meyers' claim that Orwell was the greatest and most popular writer of his time leads him to exaggerations that undermine his

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otherwise admirable defense of Orwell's achievement.

Particularly egregious is his citing, among many others, spy novelist John le Carré in praise of Orwell. Le Carré says, "Orwell's hatred of greed, cant, and the 'me' society is as much needed today as it was in his own time—probably more so. He remains an ideal for me—of clarity, anger, and perfectly aimed irony." That is a self-serving statement of a very low order. Le Carré's novels of the Cold War all too often were almost perfect exemplifications of the "moral symmetry" that denied any real moral difference between the free world and the Soviet Union's evil empire, or at least any real moral difference in their struggle to prevail. Orwell wrote not against the "me" society but against the totalitarian "them" who denied the possibility of "I." As for perfectly aimed irony, there is not a hint of irony in Orwell's depiction of the difference between human freedom and dignity, on the one hand, and a regime of oppression and debasement, on the other. Orwell's perfectly aimed anger is directed, then and now, at those whose playful irony makes light of the murderously inverted rules of the animal farm.

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SINFUL CHRISTIANS, HOLY CHURCH

During the course of his pontificate, John Paul II has many times over confessed the sins of "the children of the Church"—popes, bishops, and laity alike—who have, he says, "marred the face" of the Church, which nonetheless remains our holy and sinless mother. This distinction has puzzled and sometimes infuriated outsiders, and also some Catholics. A furious Garry Wills derides the Pope's words as "propaganda by apology." Even more thoughtful and sympathetic folk might wonder if there is not some sleight of words going on here in order to avoid implicating the Church herself in the sins of her children.

The distinction may be difficult to communicate in a society that is given to the promiscuous confession of sins that are redefined so as not to be sins, and is positively enthusiastic about confessing the sins of others, especially of institutions of putative moral authority. But it is a distinction that is hardly new with John Paul II. It is clearly taught by the earliest fathers, grounded in the Scriptures, and present also in the Reformation traditions. Demonstrating the last point is the burden of a fine article by David S. Yeago, "*Ecclesia Sancta, Ecclesia Peccatrix*: The Holiness of the Church in Martin Luther's Theology." Writing in the ecumenical theological journal *Pro Ecclesia*, Yeago notes that Luther has seldom been faulted for failing to rail with sufficient vigor against the sins of the Church of his time. At the same time, he understood, in agreement with the great tradition, that the holiness of the Church is an article of faith. Luther wrote:

"But faith alone perceives this, for we say: 'I *believe* in the holy Church.' But if you consult reason and your own eyes, you will come to a different conclusion. For you will see many things in the godly which offend you, you will see that sometimes they waver, sometimes they sin, sometimes they are weak in faith, sometimes they struggle with anger, envy, and other evil passions: 'Therefore the Church is not holy.' I deny this inference. If you look at my person or the person of your neighbor, then she will never be holy. But if you look at Christ, the Propitiator and Cleanser of the Church, she is entirely holy: for he has taken away the sins of the whole world."

When Luther speaks of the holiness of the Church he does not resort to the old dodge of saying that it is the "invisible" Church that is holy, or that only the part of the Church composed of its holy members is holy. Yeago writes, "The relationship between the holy Church and the gathering of sinners is not disjunctive; it is not that the gathering of sinners is simply *not* the Church, while the real Church is something else. Luther distinguishes between two ways of regarding *one* phenomenon, not between two different phenomena. The crowd of sinners *is* the Church, but faith sees that the sin and weakness of that crowd do not *define* the Church." Or again: "When we encounter the Church, therefore, we encounter something more than the 'human, all too human' ambiguity of her personnel. We encounter the action of the Spirit, 'in, with, and under' the sacramental and proclamatory actions of the community, and just so the gathering of sinners is more than the sum of its parts: it is the holy Church, our mother."

The Church as the Body of Christ is sinless, because Christ is sinless. Sinners who, through repentance and forgiveness, are united with Christ share in his sinlessness. The Church as *magna peccatrix*, the great sinner, is the Christian people who do not repent. Luther sardonically remarks that "the pope and the cardinals and others of that sort have no sin at all," explaining that "they are not tormented in their conscience." They are, as Yeago says, "strangers (or so Luther believed) to the struggle with unbelief and evil passion which characterizes the *congregatio fidelium*."

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One wonders what Luther would make, or does make, of John Paul II. One day, God willing, we may find out.

There is another theological dodge that, Yeago insists, Luther does not indulge, although many Protestants, including Lutherans, do. That is to say that in the order of being (ontologically) Christians really are sinners, and we can say they are holy only by virtue of Christ's holiness being imputed to them. In Yeago's reading of Luther that is to get things the wrong way round: "Therefore when Luther distinguishes between what the Church is in her sinful personnel and what she is in Christ, this is not a distinction between hard reality and a 'legal fiction' contrived through bare imputation. It must be understood in terms of his account of salvation as shared life, our participation in the being of another by the generosity of that other. Imputation itself is based on this sharing of the faithful in the being of Christ; the Father overlooks the sin which remains in the faithful precisely because they exist by faith as a single concrete whole with Christ. Union with Christ, not imputation, is the ontological rock-bottom in Luther's theology of salvation."

Yeago concludes that Luther's understanding of the Church "seems open to central concerns of the contemporary ecumenical 'ecclesiology of communion.'" Open to, one might add, but still at least in tension with aspects of the Catholic understanding of the Church as *communio*. There is, for instance, the Catholic accent on what is commonly called the Church militant and the Church triumphant, the latter including the saints and preeminently the Blessed Virgin who do not participate in "the struggle with unbelief and evil passion" that characterizes the Church militant, although they assist us in our struggle here on earth. Their holiness is not in addition to that of Christ, but is the holiness of Christ perfected in them and actively cooperating with him.

There are other differences between Catholic teaching and Luther's understanding, even when the latter is construed so ecumenically as it is by Yeago. But all Christians should be able to agree, if they think about it, that there is no sleight of words or evasiveness in the distinction between the sins of the children of the Church and the holiness of the Church herself. Of purely human institutions—such as governments, corporations, or universities—we may at times say that the wrongs of those who belong to them and run them are so pervasive and apparently beyond remedy as to warrant condemnation of the institutions themselves. But the Church is not such a purely human institution. This communion is the continuing embodiment of Christ through time. There is deep mystery here, and it is all too subject to misunderstanding and abuse. Leaders of the Church have at times simply equated themselves and their office with Christ, suggesting that any criticism of them is tantamount to criticizing Christ. The public confessions of John Paul II are designed to make necessary distinctions in understanding the mystery of the Body of Christ that is simultaneously the community of both sinners and saints. To distinguish without dividing is never easy. Whether one views the Pope's efforts as a necessary purification or as "propaganda by apology" finally depends on what one believes about the relationship between Christ and his Church, which, in turn, depends on what one believes about Christ. That is the point of controversy. Always has been. Always will be.

FT

LIFE, AND ONE LIFE

The following could not, for complicated reasons, be fitted into the usual space for poetry, but I believe it will be of interest to readers. It invites a slow reading, and the one line—"Life is not incompatible with you"—will, I believe, more than reward your attention.

Jonathan David Jones

Pronounced anencephalic
and incompatible with life

by Rebecca Jones

A firstborn son belongs to God.
Most can be redeemed, for a price.
But you, Jonathan David—
God snatches you and leaves us
empty-handed, empty-wombed, empty-hearted.

We've stormed the throne to buy you back,
offering our very life for yours.

We've pled before the Judge:
"His life belongs with us.
His parents could know joy,
the doctors awe.
Our faith would blossom
and our love grow bold.

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Dear Father, if you had a mind to heal,
You could heal his brain with a word."

But the nurses tell us
as they gaze through walls of flesh, opaque:
"I'm so sorry, but there's no mistake."
They never say it quite, and so we do,
"Jonathan David, you're our Pooh—
Our bear of very little brain."

A laugh can ease the pain
and cut encroaching terror into shreds
that only cling like webs.

How gladly we would offer you our cells.
Thousands die each day
and those we keep we throw away.
But our mind cannot be yours.
A fog has settled on our souls.

The voice comes muffled through the
darkened shroud.
"Fear not. It is I
who have redeemed him.
I've hidden his life with me.
Nursing infants sing my praise.
Before you,
Jonathan will have my mind
to think my thoughts
after me.
In my wisdom
His mind is perfect,
and your grief is power."

And so, dear Jonathan, we will believe.
We will receive and love you as you are—
Most precious to us in your desperate need.
If birth is more than you can bear,
then through our tears we'll sing a lullaby of joy.
For you will go unhindered
from the comfort of your mother's womb
to the safety of our Father's home.

If you linger with us for a fleeting breath
or two,
we will count each one and remember you.
Our breaths are numbered, too.

Dear Jonathan,
If God, in mercy, grants you one full hour,
We'll peer a little longer past your mind
into your soul.
We'll take your tiny hands in ours,
look upon you long
and sing our song.

If life rests with you for a day,
then we will give it back to God
who turns it to a thousand years.

Dear Jonathan, if you are born
sheer miracle,
and life should last;
if on this earth you burp and grin and crawl;
then you will groan with us beneath the load
of sin
and struggle with the dark within.
But you will smell the lily,
touch the head
of a baby sister in her bed.
You will seize the power and the grace
of a Savior's love,
who with you forever
bears the weight
of a past.

Jonathan David,
Life is not
incompatible with you.
However long you stay within our reach,
you and life are bound in Jesus' sheaf.
In your new home,
you will love as you are loved
and know as you are known.
Life's author stands to greet you,
Impatient, runs to meet you,
"Well-done, good and faithful friend.
Jonathan, You've served me to the end."

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THREE CONSTELLATIONS OF AMERICAN RELIGION

(Number 10 in a series on the idea of Christian America)

Today it is not easy to recall the level of cultural confidence reflected in an intellectual secularism that could produce John Dewey's *A Common Faith,* published in 1934. The same impulse is promoted today by the philosopher Richard Rorty in his Massie Lectures published under the title of *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in the Twentieth Century,* which has been previously discussed in these pages ("The Gods of Left and Right," Public Square, March 1999). But, very much unlike 1934, there is a wan and desperate feel to Rorty's proposal. Rorty frankly

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describes as utopian the vision of social justice that he calls a religion. In this religion, the chief apostles are Walt Whitman and John Dewey, and America is the New Jerusalem. "They wanted Americans," writes Rorty, "to take pride in what America might, all by itself and by its own lights, make of itself, rather than in America's obedience to any authority—even the authority of God." Especially the authority of God, one might add. Rorty quotes Whitman:

> *And I call to mankind. Be not curious about God.*
> *For I who am curious about each am not curious about God.*

Whitman and Dewey, writes Rorty, "wanted that utopian America to replace God as the unconditional object of desire. They wanted the struggle for social justice to be the country's animating principle, the nation's soul." Rorty admiringly quotes Whitman's exclamation, "How long it takes to make this American world see that it is, in itself, the final authority and reliance!" The older forms of religion have long been superfluous, even obstacles, says Rorty. "Whitman and Dewey, I have argued, gave us all the romance, and all the spiritual uplift, we Americans need to go about our public business." This religion of patriotic fervor sets Rorty against other contemporary leftisms with what he describes as their "semi-conscious anti-Americanism, which they carried over from the rage of the late sixties."

The "spiritual uplift" supplied by the religion of social justice is not simply for "public business" but also for personal redemption. Unlike Marx and others who tried to turn socialism into a science and thought they had the key to predicting the future, Rorty's religion is radically open to, adamantly insistent upon, the new—making possible a life of "pure, joyous hope." The past, including Christianity, contributes to his childlike piety of limitless possibility. "The moral we should draw from the European past, and in particular from Christianity, is not instruction about the authority under which we should live, but suggestions about how to make ourselves wonderfully different from anything that has been." Americans must embrace an endless revolution of new beginnings; every achievement is but prelude to another radically new beginning. "This new culture will be better because it will contain more variety in unity—it will be a tapestry in which more strands have been woven together. But this tapestry, too, will eventually have to be torn to shreds in order that a larger one may be woven, in order that the past may not obstruct the future."

Rorty's civil religion of ultimate devotion to the unlimited possibilities inherent in and mandated by America will, I expect, have fewer takers today than did Dewey's common faith of the 1930s. But it does indicate one direction that can be taken by a civil religion that is, in Sydney Ahlstrom's term, "debased." That direction has conspicuous precedent in American history. Not incidentally, Rorty's maternal grandfather is Walter Rauschenbusch, the chief apostle of the Protestant "Social Gospel Movement" that asserted such powerful influence around the turn of the century. Rorty's civil religion is in continuity with his grandfather's, except it is stripped of God and, if one may put it this way, the attendant theological baggage. We have seen that Reinhold Niebuhr, among others, did not think the theological baggage of the Social Gospel Movement was all that heavy. His brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, famously described the creed of liberal Protestantism: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

Taking America Back

Historians have noted that radical and utopian impulses in American culture and politics are frequently promoted by those who are but a step or a generation from the liberal Protestant pulpit. Even the God without wrath and Christ without a cross are discarded as impedimenta of a tradition that is superseded by a religion of the utterly new thing. Already in 1876, Herman Melville wrote of the New England Protestantism that he knew:

> *Rome and the Atheist have gained:*
> *These two shall fight it out—these two;*
> *Protestantism being retained*
> *For base of operations sly*
> *by Atheism.*

More than a century later, the most culturally assertive form of Protestantism is very different. Coming out from the losing side of the modernist-fundamentalist battles of the early twentieth century, what is now called evangelical Protestantism is in a position of undoubted strength in American life. But the many worlds that make up "evangelicaldom" are themselves riddled by doubts as to how they ought to be disposed toward the American experiment. Demographically, and especially in the South, those who call themselves evangelicals are typically of old White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant stock. Like their WASP cousins in New England, they were, to use the fine phrase of Dean Acheson, "present at the creation." The leaders of, say, the Southern Baptist Convention can typically trace a lineage that is every bit as

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authentically American as that of the Rortys, Deweys, and Whitmans. For both, America is undoubtedly "our country." For both, the intuitions and the rhetoric surrounding "Christian America" are very much alive.

Although acknowledging its Christian inspiration, Rorty's civil religion dare not speak its Christian name. Many evangelicals, on the other hand, are emphatic in asserting that this is Christian America, or at least it used to be. To which it is added, in tones sometimes belligerent, that they are going to take back their country. Other evangelicals, probably a growing number, say that Christian America is a lost cause. Some say it with sorrow, others say it was misbegotten from the beginning and deserves to be lost; both say that the new reality is post-Christian America. Post-Christian America, however, is still post-*Christian* America, an idea that makes no sense apart from the history and ambiguous present of Christian America.

Christianity in America comes in three main forms of approximately equal size: mainline Protestantism, evangelical Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. There are others, such as the Orthodox churches and Missouri Synod Lutherans, who do not fit into those three forms, but they are relatively small and, to the distress or satisfaction of their adherents, will likely remain "other" in the larger story of religion in America for the foreseeable future. And there are the Mormons, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, who many Christians do not recognize as Christian, but whose cultural and political influence is by no means limited to the state of Utah. Whatever other Christians may think of them, the Mormons, now numbering nearly five million, are an indigenously American religion and have a very lively sense of "Christian America." There is also the black church, a very important story in its own right. For many reasons that would take us astray from this discussion, the black church has had slight culture-forming influence since the halcyon days of Martin Luther King's leadership of the civil rights movement. It is conceivable that the black church could again become a major factor in reshaping a wider understanding of the American experiment, but, as I say, that is another story.

Our immediate concern is with the three major Christian constellations. The denominations of the Protestant mainline—now increasingly called the oldline or even the sideline—still reflect much of the old establishment of the North and Northeast, but in recent decades have experienced a severe loss in membership, institutional confidence, and cultural influence. Evangelical Protestantism is the religious and, in many ways, the cultural establishment of the South and Southwest. In every part of the country, evangelicalism supplies most of the troops and organizing centers for the political activism that, since the late 1970s, critics have termed "the religious right." Many evangelicals belong to independent local churches, while millions of others are affiliated with groups that, in the view from Manhattan, are just a rung up from the alien world of cults—the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Seventh-day Adventists, the Nazarenes, and sundry "Holiness" groups.

Then there are the somewhat more than sixty million Catholics, at least a quarter of whom are Hispanic, and a majority of those recent immigrants. The history of Catholicism in America is filled with tumult and attended by deep ambivalence toward the idea of Christian America. Although there was a small Catholic presence in the founding period, the masses of Catholic immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries felt like, and were made to feel like, aliens in a Protestant land. It did not need to be said, although anti-Catholics said it at every opportunity, that Christian America means Protestant America. Like most immigrant groups, Catholics desperately wanted to belong, to be accepted as authentic Americans. After decades, including two world wars, in which they demonstrated their patriotism (some would say super-patriotism), it was widely thought that Catholics had "come into their own" with the election of John F. Kennedy as President. In some tellings of the Catholic success story, the great achievement is that Catholics had become just like everybody else. They were, at long last, real Americans. Not incidentally, it was at just this time that Will Herberg was writing about the dissolution of Christian America into the civil religion of the American Way of Life.

A Nation with the Soul of a Church

Catholics were not taken with the idea of Christian America because Christian America meant Protestant America. But there was another reason that had to do with Catholic sensibilities shaped by their understanding of the Church. For many Protestants—from John Winthrop's Holy Commonwealth to the Founders' *novus ordo seclorum*—America itself was a kind of church. They had local churches and larger denominations, of course, but the really big thing that God was doing, the thing that mattered in terms of world-historical consequence, was the American experiment itself. Recall G. K. Chesterton's observation that America is a nation with the soul of a church. Being a Catholic, he did not mean that

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entirely as a compliment. For most Protestants, the Church is a moveable event; it "happens" when and where certain things happen, such as the pure preaching of the gospel, the experience of conversion, or the living of holy lives. The earliest Puritans had no doubt that the true Church had moved from the old world to the new.

For Catholics, on the other hand, the Church is a determinate people through time, governed by bishops who can be traced by ordination, palm on pate, to the original twelve apostles, and all in communion with Peter, the chief of apostles, through his successor, the bishop of Rome, who is the pope. While many Catholic Americans have no doubt adhered to the religion of the Redeemer Nation and even to the religion of the American Way of Life, such adherence is always in strong tension with membership in the universal Church. In this sense, as has often been remarked, there is an analogy between Catholics and Jews. For both, the civil religions of America have been attenuated by the consciousness of belonging to a people elsewhere. Of course, Protestants of almost all varieties would insist, and rightly so, that they, too, have allegiance to a Church that transcends national belonging. The Church in question, however, tends to be more of a theological construct; certainly it is not marked by the stubbornly institutionalized thus and so-ness of the Catholic Church.

During one of our recent spasms of political psychodrama, the host of a major television talk show devoted an hour to canvassing the views of "the nation's religious leadership." His guests were all Baptists noted for their political activism, including one black Baptist. This was hardly representative of the nation's religious leadership, but it was not unrepresentative of high profile leadership that is today contending in the political arena for what they perceive as the moral character of Christian America. In years past, such a discussion would certainly have included figures like Bishop James Pike, Eugene Carson Blake, and others associated with the National Council of Churches and its leading member churches such as the United Methodists, Presbyterians (USA), and Episcopalians. There are people in that mainline/oldline world who would eagerly volunteer for such a summit television seminar, but, rightly or wrongly, their views are thought to have slight political consequence, being adequately represented by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The evangelical leaders on the program, by way of sharpest contrast, are considered to be major influences in shaping the direction of the other major party. (In view of the growing and perhaps dangerous political polarizations today, it is hard to remember that only a few years ago analysts were more or less agreed on the increasing irrelevance of political parties.)

The striking thing about this discussion with "the nation's religious leadership" was not only the absence of a Catholic figure but that one could not name any Catholic who would fit into a panel composed of Pat Robertson, Charles Colson, Jerry Falwell, and Ralph Reed. There are conservative Catholics who fit into the panel in terms of sharing the views espoused. But the style of political activism represented by a Robertson or Falwell has not been and is not a Catholic thing. A notable exception in American history was Father Charles Coughlin (1891-1979), the Detroit radio priest who rallied millions in support of the New Deal, then turned against Roosevelt and embraced half-baked schemes of a markedly anti-Semitic hue until finally silenced by Church authorities in 1941. There had been nothing like Coughlin before and there has been nothing since. In the 1950s, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979) commanded the largest television audience in the nation, but his message of Peace of Mind and the American Way of Life was decidedly apolitical.

In the current churnings of religion and politics, which began with the rise of "the religious right" in the late 1970s, Protestant clergy engaged in social activism complain that their fervor is not matched by Catholic bishops and priests. On the other hand, other evangelicals, especially in the Upper Midwest and Northeast, say that, when it comes "family issues" and abortion and related "life issues," the Catholics are the only ones who can be relied on to stand up and be counted. Complicating the picture is the fact that many Catholic priests and religious honestly disagree with some of the items on the political agenda of conservative evangelical activists. In addition, Catholic immigrant history and its social and economic success was historically associated with the Democratic Party and, very specifically, with labor unions. While in recent years, notably in the Reagan elections, the Catholic vote split between the parties, that Democratic and labor legacy is still powerful. Catholics received their certificate of American legitimacy, the assurance that they had "arrived" in America, under liberal auspices. Moreover, most Catholics have their roots in the urban North, and there is more than a little cultural, as well as religious, uneasiness with the revivalist traditions of a South now making its presence so powerfully felt in national politics.

These and other considerations being taken into account, however, there remains the critical difference in Catholic attitudes toward the very idea of "Christian America." There is something alien

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about the language of "taking back" a country that was never securely theirs to begin with. From the Catholic perspective, as mentioned earlier, Christian America has been mainly Protestant America. Catholics viewed the Protestant dominance with a mix of suspicion and eagerness to prove that they really belonged, knowing full well that their acceptance could be bestowed or withheld by the Protestants in charge. Here too, there is a significant convergence between Catholic and Jewish experiences. The full social, economic, and cultural enfranchisement of both Jews and Catholics is a post-World War II development. And at least at some centers of influence, it seems likely that Jews feel more enfranchised than Catholics.

"How We Do Things Here"

A vignette illustrates the point. (You're right, I've told this before, but it is pertinent to the subject at hand.) In 1984, when Archbishop John O'Connor first came to New York, our institute hosted a number of dinners to introduce him to various circles of the city's leadership. O'Connor had arrived in the midst of a presidential election campaign in which the Democratic candidate for Vice President, Geraldine Ferraro, had publicly declared that the Church's teaching allowed a faithful Catholic to support the abortion license decreed by the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. O'Connor publicly pointed out that this was not the case, and there ensued an enormous rumpus over his alleged meddling in politics. At a dinner we hosted for the city's media leadership, a top editor of the *New York Times* opined: "Archbishop, when John F. Kennedy was elected President, some of us thought that the question of whether you Catholics really belong here, whether you understand how we do things here, had been settled. But I must frankly tell you, Archbishop, that in the few months you have been here some of us are asking that question again."

Never mind that, from the late nineteenth century on, the political life of New York has been dominated by Catholics, mainly Irish Catholics with names like O'Connor. Never mind that O'Connor's immigrant Catholic forebears arrived in this country well before the managing editor's immigrant Jewish forebears. (I should add that O'Connor decorously let the remark pass.) The interesting reality is that a Jewish leader could pose the question of "whether you understand how we do things here" in a way that it is near unimaginable that a Catholic would pose to anyone else, and certainly not to a Jew. One obvious reason for the difference is a heightened consciousness of the evil of anti-Semitism, while the evil of anti-Catholicism generally receives scant attention. Another interesting reality is that the same comment would almost certainly not have been made to, say, Pat Robertson. Robertson traces his lineage, which includes distinguished political and cultural leaders, back to before the founding; and those whom he represents, while their blood may not be as blue, are equally sure that they belong here. They understand "how we do things here," or at least how they used to do things here, and they are determined to do things that way again. In moments of alarm at the state of politics and culture, they, too, speak of post-Christian America. But the underlying, and often explicit, contention is that this once was and can be again Christian America.

Another Disestablishment

Reinhold Niebuhr was rightly impressed by what he called the ironies of American history, and those ironies are pronounced in the religio-cultural history of the society. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the "Benevolent Empire" of evangelical Protestantism (almost all Protestants were called evangelicals then) exercised what seemed to be an unquestionable cultural hegemony, proclaiming a gospel of inevitable progress toward a genuinely Christian society as defined by the Social Gospel Movement. In the battle between modernists and fundamentalists, the latter were thoroughly routed, as indelibly recounted by H. L. Mencken and others in their accounts of the 1925 Scopes "monkey trial" in Dayton, Tennessee. Driven into the cultural wilderness—and, in part, fleeing into that wilderness—fundamentalism was, as J. M. Cameron put it, bagged and stuffed, presumably never to be heard from again. Meanwhile, the liberal heirs of the modernist triumph resumed their hegemony, or appeared to do so. Today it is hard to remember that fifty years ago the National Council of Churches—which included the oldline-liberal denominations—was almost universally acknowledged as the religious establishment of the United States.

Appearances were deceptive. The NCC and its member churches looked like the re-establishment of the religio-cultural hegemony of the earlier Benevolent Empire, but many things had changed. For one thing, wars, unprecedented atrocities, and the rise of totalitarianisms had not been kind to the gospel of inevitable progress. For another, liberal religion, having abandoned the intellectual defense of doctrine—lest it be tainted with the brush of supposedly vanquished "fundamentalism"—lost its hold on cultural leadership, which gravitated to the university, the media, and other institutions. Unlike the Benevolent Empire, the re-establishment was not

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a religio-cultural establishment but a purely religious establishment. It was religion in search of a way to make itself useful to the culture, with others defining what is meant by useful. The consuming passion was to be "relevant," and relevance was discovered in the service of "social change," most dramatically in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s.

When that movement splintered in the mid-1960s between Dr. King's American dream and varieties of "black power" and "black nationalist" depictions of the American nightmare, and when this potent mix was added to the growing polemic on campuses and elsewhere against "Amerika," a polemic generated by or at least focused on the Vietnam War, the leadership of what had been viewed as the religio-cultural establishment became a vaguely religious counterculture. In the subsequent decades, as the children of the secular counterculture of the 1960s assumed positions of leadership throughout the society, they no longer had any need for the institutions of liberal religion that had once made themselves so useful. The National Council of Churches, once a national institution that seemed comparable to the American Medical Association or Harvard University, was by the end of the century a skeleton of its former self, barely able to pay its bills, pitiably seeking to demonstrate its public relevance by acting as a wholly owned subsidiary of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The heirs of the modernists were now in the wilderness into which they had once driven their fundamentalist opponents. Meanwhile, the heirs of the fundamentalists, now calling themselves evangelicals, began in the late 1940s a long march back into the public square, where they now exercise powerful, if not always controlling, influence in the other major party. Only in America, as they say.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Faithful readers have come to expect the annual comment on favorite baby names. It's not an obsession, simply attentiveness to important cultural indicators. I haven't seen the report for this year, but meanwhile there is columnist Mark Steyn's list of the *National Post*'s Top Ten Baby Names of '00: Chad, Darva, Regis, Condoleezza, Elián, Marisleysis, Eminem, Tipper, W, and Stockwell. If you're not familiar with all of them, be grateful.

■ What, me? Some journalists are very thin-skinned when it is suggested that they are hostile to religion. But what might better explain, for instance, the reporting of the statement of Mel Martinez when he was nominated as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development? "Today for me is the fulfillment of the promise of America, the promise that regardless of where you come from, what language you speak, the color of your skin, or your economic circumstances, if you share the dream of a brighter tomorrow, and you're willing to pursue it with respect for others and an abiding faith in God, all things are possible." In some, not all, newspapers around the country, including the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *St. Petersburg Times*, *Bergen County Record*, and *Dallas Morning News*, the above statement was quoted, but without the reference to an abiding faith in God. That was simply omitted. Obviously, somebody made a decision to omit it. There may be a better word, but "hostility" would seem to do the job.

■ I have an entire file on dumb things that bishops say, and readers persist in sending more. My habit of deference to episcopal authority, bordering on docility, inhibits me from dipping into the file very often. There is, for instance, the bishop who addresses a diocesan rally and urges them to "project a more positive image." The question to be answered, he declares, is, "Are we anti-abortion or pro-life?" Take some time to work on that one. Then there is the Southern bishop who has banned the perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in parishes. Apparently people who go in for that sort of thing are suspected of being a bit fanatical. Such people should ask themselves, according to the bishop, "Are they as respectful and reverent toward Christ's presence in the gathered Body of the Church as they are to the presence of Christ in the Sacrament?" If that's the test, most of us would have to stop going to Mass altogether. And this I have over the years heard dozens of times: "I've been attacked by both the *Wanderer* and the *National Catholic Reporter*, so I must be doing something right." It doesn't follow. Sometimes right and left can both recognize a wrong. And then there are really smart things that bishops say. For instance, my late bishop, Cardinal O'Connor: "I get up every morning praying that I will get through the day without discouraging any initiative of the Holy Spirit." May all of us, and not only bishops, live that prayer.

■ I am frequently asked, How can you read everything? The short and honest answer is that I don't. I don't usually read, for instance, the *Industry Standard*. But the sharp-eyed Joseph Brosnan, who is also a member of Immaculate Conception, my parish

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here in Manhattan, sends me a full-page advertisement from the September 4, 2000 issue. The ad promotes FIRSTWORLD, a business that protects business databases, and at the top is a sonogram picture of a very little baby in the womb. Beneath the picture: "Few environments are as safe and secure as our Internet Data Center." What to make of this? One possibility is that the people who designed the ad were making a subtle pro-life point, knowing full well that, in the era of *Roe v. Wade*, the womb is far from being a safe and secure environment. If so, good for them. On the other hand, maybe they don't know about the unlimited abortion license. But that's improbable. Isn't it?

■ A sentimental reflection on the decline of religious community in the *National Catholic Reporter* concludes with this author identification: "Trappist Fr. James Stephen Behrens lives at Holy Spirit Monastery in Conyers, Georgia. His e-mail address is james@trappist.net." Trappists on e-mail? Apart from the clickety clack of the keyboard, I suppose the traditional silence could be maintained, in a manner of chattering.

■ We are not likely to get a more passionate or convincing argument against affirmative action than John H. McWhorter's *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America* (Free Press, 285 pp., $24). The author is a young associate professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, who frankly acknowledges that he would not have gotten to where he is as easily as he did were he not black. He is candid also in acknowledging that he is not the first black writer to make the argument against compensatory privileges for African-Americans. He writes, "The national dialogue is beginning to change already; indeed, I would not have written this book if I did not feel that I was part of a growing race-wide sentiment." Affirmative action, he contends, has entrenched three vices among American blacks: victimology, separatism, and anti-intellectualism. More persuasively than anyone I have read, McWhorter responds to those who say that black opponents of affirmative action, such as Clarence Thomas and himself, are "pulling up the ladder" after they climbed it to success. Especially in the academy, if you are black, you cannot help but receive affirmative action preference. If affirmative action was ever needed in the past—and McWhorter seems to be unsure about that—today it is widening the gap of academic achievement between whites and blacks, and depriving blacks of the benefits of competition and the dignity of succeeding by merit. McWhorter sums it up this way: "I maintain that we have reached this state of affairs as an unintended result of the Civil Rights Act, which gave a demoralized group the keys to success by fiat rather than through the slow and agonizing avenue of working within the society, gradually eroding stereotypes and social barriers as Jews and the Irish did. We must have compassion for the black Americans who have unwittingly been disabled by this strange by-product of a good thing. However, our compassion must not let us allow this sociological excrescence to continue to condemn this race to eternal second-class status." The last point is crucial. McWhorter underscores that only one in five blacks is today in the inner city, only one in four is below the poverty level, yet middle- and upper-middle-class African-Americans perpetuate the myth that they are victims in need of special preferences for generations without end. Academic under-achievement by blacks, undeniably connected to affirmative action, is the greatest cause of continuing racial inequality today. That is McWhorter's argument, and it should be engaged by the makers of public policy and by all who care about the resolution of what Gunnar Myrdal so many years ago called "the American dilemma." In view of that, one cannot help but be disappointed that on the dustjacket, where publishers designate the category to which a book belongs, *Losing the Race* is consigned to the ghetto of "African-American Studies." The publisher should read McWhorter on "Separatism"—and on "Victimology" and "Anti-Intellectualism" as well.

■ Our national chronicler of cultural breakthroughs has come through again. It seems that gays and lesbians are given to beating each other up a good deal, and not just when having kinky sex. "Silence Ending About Abuse in Gay Relationships," is the headline in the *New York Times*. "We're just now beginning to take same-sex domestic violence out of the closet," says Jennifer Rakowski, Associate Director of Community United Against Violence, a crisis intervention group in San Francisco. "We had to get acceptance as individuals first." Individual acceptance first, violence next. But when violence comes out of the closet it's in for a rude surprise, encountering an entrenched prejudice that might be called batterphobia. The women, it seems, are as bad as the men. Bekki Ow-Cuevas fled a violent husband only to be assaulted by her female partner. "There was a piece of me that really wanted to believe that women are safe people," she ruefully says. It seems that women can be really mean. The partner of a diabetic woman forced her to eat sugar. Two lesbians who are disabled report that their partners got their kicks by taking them to isolated wooded areas and leaving them there without their wheelchairs. Moreover, the

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police have a problem when they're called to intervene in cases of same-sex violence. "Stereotypes of meek, overpowered women and rampaging, abusive men are of little help to officers responding to a battle between two men or two women. Often, the abuser is the smaller gay man, or the more feminine lesbian." Some cops probably think it's downright unnatural. "Unfortunately, we're still twenty-five years behind the battered women's movement," says Susan Holt of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. "But at least we've gotten started." There is something weirdly wrongheaded about a movement that promotes a way of life that wants the protections of the "natural" that it adamantly denies. Of course, natural justice requires that protection be provided, also to those who deny that there is anything normative in nature. The element of putative cultural breakthrough in the *Times* story is the acknowledgment that gays and lesbians can be as nasty as anyone else. Only in a journalistic world where the opposite is commonly assumed to be the case would that be considered a story. Not surprisingly, the upshot of the story is that same-sex violence is yet another argument for viewing same-sex unions as natural as marriage. You batter your partners, we batter our partners, so what's the difference? It's as good as the other arguments.

■ In the overheated partisanship of Washington, D.C., the Ethics and Public Policy Center renders invaluable service in nurturing reasonable discussion across the usual divides. This is evident in a recent conversation, "Conflict on Campus: Religious Liberty vs. Gay Rights?", that brought together gay advocates, conservative Christians, and public policy experts to examine the decision of Tufts University and other schools to exclude religious groups that "discriminate" against gays by holding that homosexual acts are immoral. It was a lively and, for the most part, intelligent discussion. The upshot was something close to a consensus that a private university has a legal right to make such a decision, but it is detrimental to its mission as a university, not least because it would send the message that morally traditional students are not welcome. Particularly thoughtful were the interventions of Professor William A. Galston of the University of Maryland. He said, "In my global view, the warp and woof of Western civilization are secular-rational philosophy and revealed religion. It would be a shame if an institution such as Tufts, in an effort to make the world very safe for one, made it entirely unsafe for the other. I believe the internal dialogue of the university would be much richer if both were present on honored terms." One might add the caveat that, at least in the case of Christianity, revealed religion requires also rational philosophy, but, as I say, this is a refreshingly honest and intelligent exchange. For a copy of "Center Conversations, Number 6," send $2 to Ethics and Public Policy, 1015 15th Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ Here is a spot of unpleasantness, and it deserves at least a notice lest readers who are also readers of the *New Oxford Review* might be confused. Mr. Dale Vree, editor of that magazine, has published a long attack on what he takes to be my views on whether all people will ultimately be saved, a doctrine commonly called universalism. Based on his misreading of my book *Death on a Friday Afternoon*, Mr. Vree writes, "Neuhaus hems and haws, but finally answers yes, all are saved." Hemming and hawing? Me? Well, I suppose I should 'fess up. As longtime readers have always suspected, equivocation is my besetting fault. Mr. Vree's assertion, however, is false. What I do say, along with many venerable thinkers in the Christian tradition, is that we may *hope* that all will, ultimately, be saved. Mr. Vree goes on for all of eight pages to argue that what he says I teach, which I do not teach, would encourage, among other bad things, abortion, infidelity, divorce, homosexuality, euthanasia, and skipping Mass. He ends up by comparing my book with the writings of notoriously dissident theologians such as Fr. Hans Küng and Fr. Richard McBrien. Much of what he says would be true, if I taught what he says I teach, which I do not. I have no need, interest, or intention of engaging in extended public polemics with Mr. Vree. I would note that *Death on a Friday Afternoon* is not a doctrinal manual but a book of devotional reflections. For a more systematic treatment of salvation, the motive for evangelization, and related questions, interested readers might want to consult my commentary on the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer) in the October 1991 issue of FT ("Reviving the Missionary Mandate," Public Square). That commentary received many favorable responses, including a warm commendation from Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who is reputed to have a keen eye for orthodox teaching. For those not familiar with it, the *New Oxford Review* is an independent monthly published in Berkeley, California. It is perhaps best known for its strident advertisements in other publications. In the past, we found it possible to carry some of its more responsible ads in the pages of this journal. Mr. Vree understands himself to be a defender of Catholic orthodoxy, and I wish him all the best in doing that, noting only that the truth is never served by misrepresentation.

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■ Recall Humpty Dumpty's answer to Alice's objection that you can't make words mean whatever you want them to mean. "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all." To judge by the new fourth edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the master of the language is however people use the language. Political correctness dictates that there is no correctness when it comes to English usage. To be sure, language is a living thing, but what's the point of a dictionary if a word means whatever you want it to mean? For instance, *American Heritage* notes that "disingenuous" means "not straightforward or candid; insincere or calculating." It then notes that the meaning has been "shifting lately," and many people say "disingenuous" when they intend "unaware or uninformed; naive." But the editors cannot bring themselves to say the second usage is incorrect. Edward Rothstein observes that Dr. Johnson's 1755 dictionary defined the word as "meanly artful, viciously subtle." Reviewing *American Heritage*, Rothstein writes: "I don't think this dictionary is disingenuous in Dr. Johnson's sense; I think it is disingenuous in the incorrect popular sense. With all its usefulness and sophistication, it is naive. It cannot take responsibility for the words it describes. Yes, all usages are of interest, and yes, language is mercurial, and yes, a dictionary needs multiple perspectives. But this dictionary, like many other contemporary counterparts, sits comfortably amid the swirl of conflicting assertions, nodding this way and that, deferring to the mastery of each and all, while urging the reader to hop up and join it on its precarious Humpty Dumptyish perch."

■ On the other hand, how can we forget the words of that post-Marxist Marxist Terry Eagleton in his inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1992? "Linguistic purity is the last refuge of the paranoid and pathological, the visceral, proto-fascist fantasy of those who feel undermined in their very being by the polyglot social order they themselves have helped to fashion." Very easily, as it happens.

■ "Jews Can't Take 'Yes' for an Answer" is an important article in *Reform Judaism* by Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis who argues that some Jewish leaders are undermining the remarkable rapprochement between Catholics and Jews since the Second Vatican Council, and especially during the pontificate of John Paul II. The regular moving of the goalposts in the dialogue and constant carping on issues such as the alleged silence of Pius XII in World War II is producing noticeable exasperation among Catholics. Schulweis sympathetically quotes Edward Cardinal Cassidy who said, "We expect and hope that the Jewish partners will at least show us respect. You can hardly claim to respect someone if at every possible opportunity you are ready to criticize the person, even without making a real effort to understand and appreciate the position of the other person." Schulweis comments, "This is a charge more serious than not being able to take 'yes' for an answer. We are facing a threat to Catholic-Jewish relations, and repairing the breach will require our earnest attention and moral statesmanship." In the same vein, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, recently said this in a speech at Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts: "There is a desperate need for a joint campaign of positive religious education. This means that Catholics need to educate Catholics about Jews, and Jews need to educate Jews about Catholics. I believe that the Church is far ahead of the Jewish community in this regard. We have failed utterly in conveying to our young people the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the Church since the Second Vatican Council. Too often we teach nothing at all about other religious traditions to our children, and what we do teach about Catholicism is likely to focus on the Inquisition and the Crusades. This is a moral failure of the first order, and we have a profound responsibility to provide an immediate remedy."

■ Soulforce, Dignity/USA, Equal Partners in Faith. Such are the names of three gay and lesbian groups agitating for Christian legitimation. They sponsored a demonstration aimed at disrupting the Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington where the bishops were meeting. Said William Donohue of the Catholic League: "The militants talk about tolerance and practice intolerance. They talk about diversity and work to impose uniformity. They talk about democracy and represent no one but the alienated few. And they talk about peace and invite violence. They need our prayers, but they also need to spend some time in jail." The bishops kept their cool, while the police did arrest a few for an hour or two in jail, including William Sloane Coffin, onetime Yale chaplain and legendary wordsmith, now age seventy-six, who declared, "The Catholic bishops are steering the car by what they see in the rearview mirror." It's one way of keeping an eye on what may be catching up on you, remembering that objects in the mirror may be closer than they appear.

■ "On September 14, a joint session of the U.S. House and Senate basically bowed down to Baal." So says

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Timothy Lamer in the evangelical Protestant magazine *World*. What happened that day is that a Hindu priest gave the invocation at a session addressed by the Prime Minister of India. Evangelicals, says Mr. Lamer, should think again about their enthusiasm for religion in public. "Increasingly, the result of their effort will be a golden calf in America's pluralistic public square. How will they react? If Mr. Samuldrala's invocation is any indication, they will silently bow and not make waves, for the sake of having religion—any religion, even soul-destroying religion—in the public square." Forget that Baal and the golden calf are not Hindu: Mr. Lamer's point is clear enough. In the same issue, James Skillen of the Center for Public Justice comes to a different conclusion, contending that "most Americans are not convinced that secularizing the public square is the way to do justice to diverse faiths." He suggests that the public square should "make room for all faiths—both religious and secular—without giving a privileged position to any of them. . . . The United States is not a Jewish state or a Catholic state; not a Protestant state or Muslim state. And it certainly should not be a secularized state." Skillen thinks the chaplaincy program in the military, government support for faith-based social services, and parental choice in education are indicative of the ways to go in a pluralistic society. Mr. Lamer is wrong, I think, to claim that bowing one's head in respect means that one is joining in a prayer to Hindu gods. Presumably Christian legislators, if they were praying, were praying to the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Mr. Skillen is right about pluralism, although I cavil at his referring to the United States as simply a state. "The United States" refers to a country and society that surely is, as a matter of historical and sociological fact, Christian and founded upon a Judeo-Christian worldview. Citizens of the United States have every right to advocate that the government, i.e., the state, should formally declare itself to be Christian. That is in my judgment, and, I am glad to say, in the judgment of almost all Americans, a very dumb thing to advocate. I would recast the *World* debate to argue that it is precisely because of the Judeo-Christian ethic that the public square should be hospitable to all faiths. Because, first, we do not sacralize the public square, mistaking it for the Church. And, second, because we recognize that all people, whatever their religious or other errors, are made in the image of God and therefore bearers of a human dignity that demands our respect. The Lamer-Skillen exchange usefully poses questions about which all Christians need greater clarity.

■ Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople is in an unenviable position. Holding on to an embattled enclave in a Muslim society and challenged by the Moscow Patriarchate for Orthodox leadership, he and his office are in danger of being bypassed by history. Bartholomew has raised his profile, as they say, by embracing fashionable environmentalisms. In Europe he is lionized by environmentalists as the "Green Patriarch," and a while back he was here in New York to receive an environmental award at the very elegant Cosmopolitan Club. In his talk he said that a natural link between Orthodoxy and environmentalism is the "ascetical element" of the Orthodox tradition. "Restraint frees us from selfish demands, so that we may offer what remains and place it at the disposal of others. This is the result of our freedom from avarice, which has its roots in the lack of faith and the making of a god out of matter, which we consider idolatry." All very true, of course, but the *New York Times* reporter could not resist a naughty but accurate observation: "Those remarks may have seemed slightly incongruous in the club's vast dining room, where guests dined on an exquisite lunch of quail and various wines, surrounded by ornate mirrors, candelabra, and elaborate marble carvings of scenes from antiquity. But the guests seemed inspired by the Patriarch's message." No doubt. So is Patriarch Bartholomew being used by the glitterati of the environmental left? One suspects he is aware of that risk, but is prepared to do what is necessary to help make sure that the Patriarchate of Constantinople is not forgotten altogether.

■ It was a big gathering of Catholic liturgists at the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, and they were addressed by Lutheran Bishop Robert A. Rimbo of the Southeast Michigan Synod. "Just as the liturgical movement began at a grassroots level, so we too cannot wait for the powers that be to approve of our understanding of what is sufficient for our practice of eucharistic hospitality," said Rimbo. "It is time for us to begin communing together at the one table of the one Lord as the one church, and consider the consequences of such when God reveals them to us." He said that when he was a student in Milwaukee he often communed at the Catholic cathedral. "So far, it hasn't done any damage," he added. The report says "the audience roared with laughter and applause." What goes around comes around. More than thirty years ago I was as a very young Lutheran pastor the token Protestant on the board of the National Liturgical Conference. The Conference was then a very big thing, with its annual liturgical weeks drawing crowds of twenty thousand or more. In the heady atmosphere immediately following Vatican Council II, it was thought to be only a question of time, and not

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very much time at that, before intercommunion would be the order of the day. In the Liturgical Conference we assumed we were only a few steps ahead of "the powers that be," and so at our board meetings it was thought very ecumenical indeed when I as a Lutheran presided at the eucharistic celebration. "Look," I said to Catholic audiences, "intercommunion is easy. Just do it. I do it all the time." And they roared with laughter and applause. That was a very long time ago, and I hope that, at least in this respect, I have put aside childish ways. In the intervening years there have been very serious and difficult theological dialogues between Lutherans and Catholics, in which the continuing connections between doctrine, ordered ministry, ecclesial communion, and eucharistic communion have been clarified. For a brief moment, way on back there, it seemed avant garde for Catholics to agree with Lutherans that the question of "the powers that be"—meaning apostolic ministry exercised by bishops in communion with the Petrine ministry of Rome—was an irrelevancy. Now it is understood that the only unity, as expressed in eucharistic communion, that can be pleasing to God is unity in the fullness of the truth that Christ intends for his Church. At least one hopes that is understood by most Catholics and most Lutherans.

■ Edward F. Halpin was at Buchenwald with Patton's Third Army and later reflected, "Only the concept of eternity could explain the ambiguity between a loving God and the Holocaust. For if life does not end with the grave, we should pity the prison guard, not his victim." Halpin is an amateur theologian—amateur meaning lover, which is a very good thing to be—who ponders this and related questions about good and evil in a little book, *Man or Mankind?* (Dorrance), which came to mind while reading John Cooper's excellent study, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Eerdmans). Among other points, Cooper, who is a very professional amateur theologian and philosopher, makes a convincing case that wrongheaded biblical scholarship of the twentieth century played the primary role in discrediting an almost universal understanding that justice requires an ultimate judgment. Everyday ambiguities and outrages far short of the dimensions of Buchenwald, when seriously thought about, bring that truth home. The four final things—death, judgment, heaven, hell—are largely missing from Christian preaching, catechesis, and piety today. A good many historians attribute the triumph of Christianity in the early centuries to the fact that it had the most convincing answers to those irrepressible hopes and fears. It may be that the renewal of Christianity in our time will begin with the confident rediscovery of those answers.

■ I noted that the fifteenth edition of Bartlett's had a convenient ellipsis in place of the Hippocratic Oath's forbidding of abortion. A gimlet eye award to Thomas J. Walsh of West Bloomfield, Michigan, for pointing out that the sixteenth has restored the words, "Similarly, I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion." That the editors had conscience qualms about having fiddled with the classic text is an encouraging thought.

■ "God, Women, and Medicine" was the title of the *60 Minutes* segment. The subject was the refusal of Catholic hospitals to provide what is called a full range of reproductive services, which means help in avoiding reproduction, including the termination of the "product" when reproduction is not avoided. *60 Minutes* featured Frances Kissling of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) who declared, "It's not like the old days. Doctors are no longer gods. Now we have bishops who are gods." William Donohue of the Catholic League, who embarrasses progressive Catholics by protesting attacks on Catholicism, said of Kissling and her part in the program: "Her anti-Catholicism is so blatant that on two occasions the bishops have expressly denounced Catholics for a Free Choice for fraudulently posing as a Catholic group. And this is the 'expert' that Morley Safer repairs to for commentary. It is on the order of asking those blacks who voted for George Wallace what they think about civil rights and then airing their self-hating views as representative of African-American thought. The only difference being that Kissling is getting paid around a quarter of a million dollars by the Ford Foundation and their ilk for doing the bidding of Catholic-bashing elites." Analogies are always subject to quibbling, but that would seem to get it about right.

■ *Publishers Weekly* says that Peter Singer's *Writings on an Ethical Life* may be his "break-out" book. All the usual media outlets, we are told, are lining up to interview Princeton's peddler of bargain-basement utilitarianism, which should be good for sales. And some of the unusuals. Nat Hentoff, for instance, interviewed Singer and strongly disagrees with him, saying that the gist of his message is that some lives are not worth living—e.g., severely disabled children and the expendable elderly—and should therefore be terminated. Noting that Nazi atrocities stemmed from "small beginnings," Hentoff says Singer's book is dangerous. *PW* quotes a bookseller who scoffed, "The alternative to writing that is dangerous is writing that

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is safe, and that, to a bookseller, is writing that doesn't sell." So neat is the fit between intellectual courage and capitalist greed. Dan Halpern, Singer's publisher at HarperCollins, says Singer gets a bum rap from his critics. "The sore points for people are his writings on euthanasia and impaired infants. They imagine he is trying to mandate killing without cause." Not at all. It is simply that he is so productive of new causes for killing.

■ Brooke D. Haas, director of sales for Intercollegiate Studies Institute, has divided feelings about the December issue. On the one hand, ISI is delighted with the attention we paid their "A Student's Guide To" series of books, and they've received many responses. On the other hand, we said the books are free when in fact the offer is one free book to students or professors who are members of ISI. Otherwise they are $5.95 each, and well worth it. Write ISI Books, P.O. Box 4431, 3901 Centerville Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19807.

■ They try their best, but Ross G. Douthat, a Harvard junior who started reading FIRST THINGS when he was twelve years old, writes in the *Crimson* that even at Harvard they fall somewhat short of a total obliteration of historical and cultural fact. Surrounding the "winter break," there is no mention of Christmas, of course, but an official Harvard mailing did wish folks a "happy millennial observance." Douthat thought this displayed "a remarkable lack of respect for those faiths that choose not to follow a dating system based upon an obscure Nazarene carpenter's historically dubious birth." But maybe they're not aware of the origins of the system. "If you believe their academic jargon, after all, we've just completed two thousand years of the 'Common Era'—which apparently took over when the Uncommon Era ran out of gas midway through the reign of Caesar Augustus." After almost ten years of reading FT, he might want to think about writing for us.

■ Who's afraid of the Salvation Army? Russia, for one. The Moscow courts have refused to register the group because it is a "militarized" organization under foreign command.

■ Here's a new book from Crossroad, a Catholic publisher of sorts. *Is the Pope Catholic? A Woman Confronts Her Church* by Joanna Manning. The author is a former nun, it says here, and she "powerfully articulates how John Paul II's current views on women are not only a disaster for the Catholic Church, but are also a threat to the well-being of all women, regardless of belief." Well, yes, but those are only his current views. Wait until he reads Ms. Manning's book.

■ John Lukacs, that distinguished historian, is interviewed in *Books & Culture*, that fine evangelical publication. (The two most recent Lukacs books are *A Thread of Years* and *Five Days in London, May 1940*, the latter recounting the decisive exchanges between Churchill and his cabinet on what to do about Hitler.) Lukacs is asked, "How does your Christian faith influence your historical understanding?" Here is what he says in response: "I find the Catholic concept of human nature utterly convincing. As Pascal said, men are both beasts and angels—because of the essential inclinations of their souls. By the way, my view of human nature is the opposite not only of Karl Marx, but also of someone like Alan Greenspan, or Bill Buckley, or Adam Smith. I believe that the most important thing in the world is what people think and believe, and that the entire material organization of the world is the consequence of this. The human mind does not follow the physical laws of the universe. Take a briefcase. The more there is in it, the more difficult it is to stuff more into it. But the more we know about something, the *easier* it is for us to accumulate more knowledge about it. Our mind consists not of facts but of words. Facts do not exist apart from the words with which we express them and think of them. The words are not the packaging of the facts; the words are the facts themselves. We think in words. There is no fact that can be separated from the statement of the fact. History—unlike chemistry or biology or sociology—has no jargon, has no scientific language of its own. We write, teach, speak, think about history in everyday language. This has a biblical and theological basis. Language is a very mysterious gift from God. In the beginning was the Word. Not the Fact. Not the Picture. Not the Number. Not the Image. It is through words that we relate to each other. It is through words that we can give pain or pleasure to each other. And because of this—and every historian worth his salt ought to know this—the choice of the word is not only a matter of accuracy, not only an aesthetic choice, it is a moral choice. It is a moral choice how I describe something that has happened."

■ Is nothing normal any more? I remember reading many years ago that an association of psychiatrists had determined that 35 percent of people in Manhattan are in need of clinical care. I thought at the time that

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the figure was on the low side, unless, of course, one assumes their eccentric state is normal for New Yorkers. Now comes an article in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* assessing the characters in A. A. Milne's children's books and arriving at grim conclusions. Winnie the Pooh is suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and could be prone to Tourette's syndrome. Eeyore has chronic depression and Christopher Robin is in the midst of a gender-identity crisis. "Pooh's most prominent disorder is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, the doctors conclude, but he also suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, suggested by his single-minded pursuit of honey and his repetitive counting behavior. They point out his impulsive behavior, including when he disguises himself as a rain cloud to get honey. His food obsession has led to obesity." The diagnosis goes on: "Pooh's best friend, Piglet, is struggling with generalized anxiety disorder, the authors found. His symptoms include anxiety, blushing, and stammering. The doctors say there was clearly no early medical intervention because childhood treatment with an anti-panic drug could have altered his behavior. Eeyore, the sorry donkey with the detachable tail, suffers from depression, which could be helped by Prozac; therapy might help him deal with the amputation of his tail. Owl, the bespectacled fowl, seems the brightest. However, that he pretends to read things that he cannot and that he covers up language and spelling errors are clear indications of dyslexia, the doctors say. Rabbit has an untreatable narcissistic personality disorder." In addition to his gender-identity disorder, Christopher Robin has a host of other problems, not least being that he spends so much time talking to animals. "Adult intervention is needed," the doctors conclude. Dr. Sarah Shea, the lead author of the article, says it is in part a parody, but then she cannot help but add, "These characters do have some pretty significant disorder patterns." For Pooh, a low dosage of Ritalin is prescribed. Thus are the fun, challenge, and adventure of the normal abnormalities of the world normalized to death.

■ I was lecturing in the Vancouver area and the fellow doing the introduction noted that there were many ROFTERS in the audience. This was new to me. In Canada, I am told, a ROFTER is a Reader of FIRST THINGS. It is how people recognize one another in what is not exactly a secret society. There is, for instance, no special handshake, but there is that alertness of mind, civility of manner, and eagerness to engage questions that matter. At least that is how it was explained to me, and, sure enough, there seemed to be a lot of them in the audience. May their tribe multiply. We will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people you think are likely ROFTERS. Please send names and addresses to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York, 10010 (or email to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-800-783-4903, or visit www.firstthings.com.

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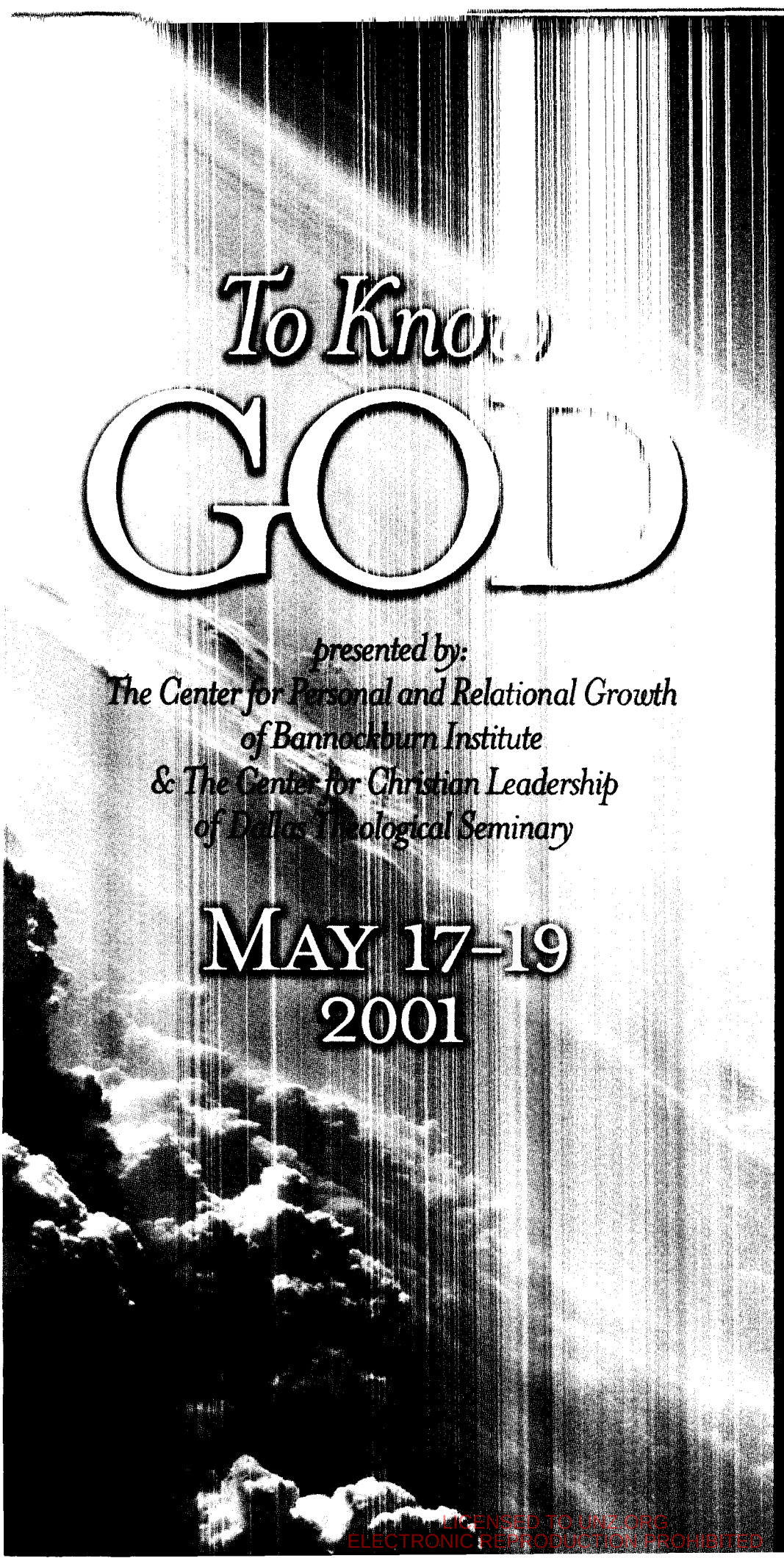

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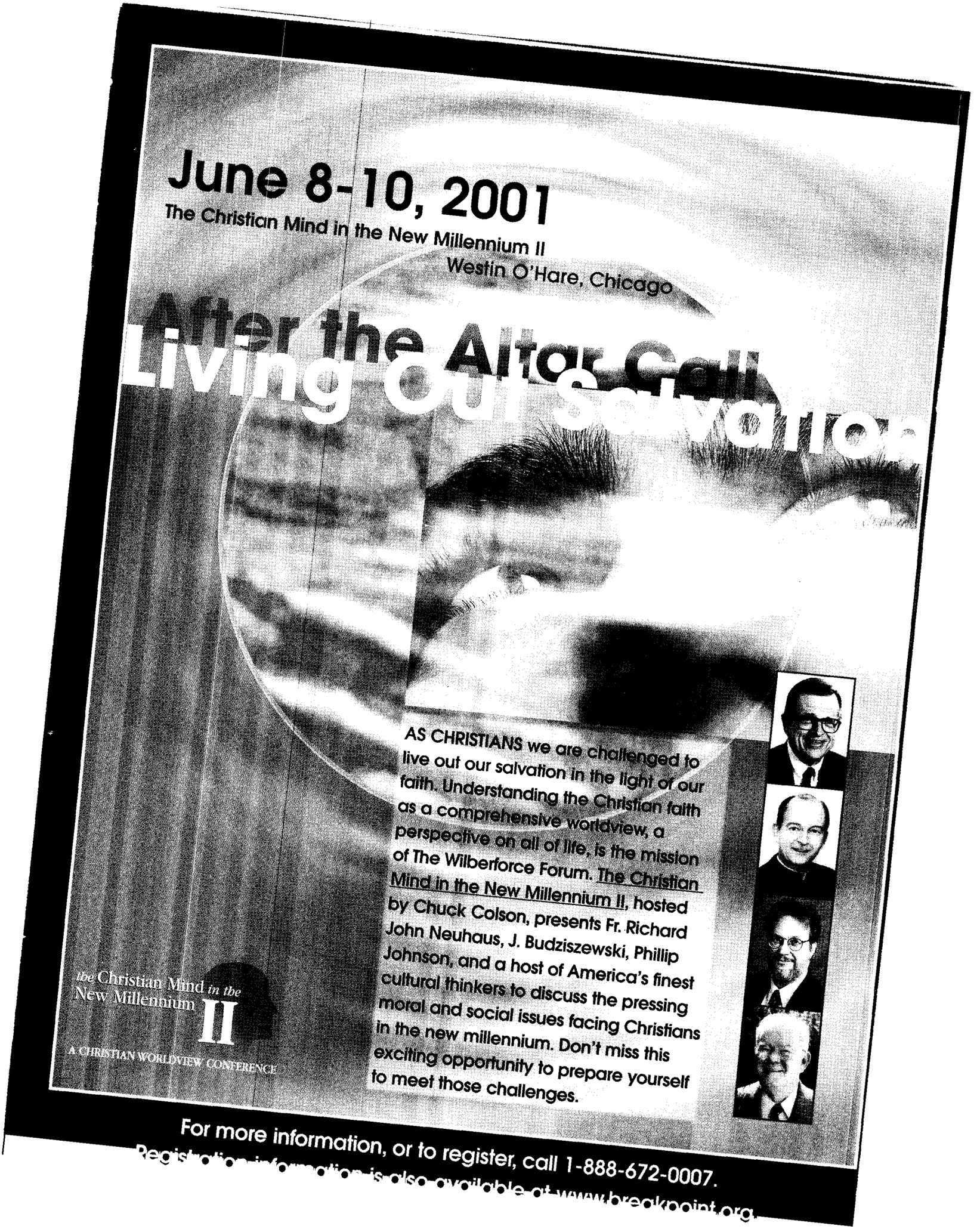
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